

The Influence
of Emerson

Æ Æ Æ

Edwin D. Mead

92 E533m (2)

**Kansas City
Public Library**



This Volume is for
REFERENCE USE ONLY

THE INFLUENCE OF
EMERSON

THE INFLUENCE OF EMERSON

BY

EDWIN D. MEAD

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
1903

COPYRIGHT 1903
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

TO

EDWARD EVERETT HALE

THE FRIEND OF EMERSON

THE FRIEND AND AIDER OF A MULTITUDE OF US,
WHO LOVE HIM AND REVERE HIM

“HE IS OUR BISHOP, AND WE HAVE NOT DONE WITH HIM YET.”

These papers, touching a few of the many influences of Emerson, philosophical, religious, literary, and political, have served, the last two many times, as public addresses. Parts of all of them are twenty years old, and all of them have grown in the years. Some parts have changed much more than others; and if they continued to lie on the table, answering calls, for some years yet, all might see greater changes still. I have found that few studies of Emerson bring out his thought and attitude more clearly or impressively than those in which we view him in relation to Parker, with whom among religious teachers in his time his sympathies were closest, and to Carlyle, with whom his affinities and contrasts are equally striking and didactic. There are doubtless repetitions in the papers here and there; and this, and much besides, their original character and purpose must excuse. They are brought together here, such as they are, in the hope that they may do their part, with the many words that will be said in this centennial time, to prompt young men and women to such new companionship with Emerson as shall give them a larger portion of his idealism and lofty spirit in religion and philosophy and in the service of mankind.

Contents

	PAGE
I. THE PHILOSOPHY OF EMERSON . .	3
II. EMERSON AND THEODORE PARKER .	91
III. EMERSON AND CARLYLE	157

I

The Philosophy of Emerson

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EMERSON

TRANSCENDENTALISM is the popular term for the philosophy of Emerson, with those who recognize that he had a philosophy. Men call him a Transcendentalist, as they called him and his friends sixty years ago. He did not like the term, and thought that most people who used it knew little about what it meant. As commonly used by the intelligent man sixty years ago or now, and as accepted by Emerson, it is simply another word for Idealist. "What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us," he said himself, in the midst of the Transcendental movement in New England, "is Idealism,—Idealism as it appears in 1842." "The Idealism of the present day," he said, "acquired the name of Transcendental from the use of that term by Immanuel Kant, of Königsberg, who replied to the sceptical philosophy of Locke, which insisted that there was nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the experience of

4 The Influence of Emerson

the senses, by showing that there was a very important class of ideas, or imperative forms, which did not come by experience, but through which experience was acquired; that these were intuitions of the mind itself; and he denominated them *Transcendental* forms. The extraordinary profoundness and precision of that man's thinking have given vogue to his nomenclature, in Europe and America, to that extent, that whatever belongs to the class of intuitive thought is popularly called at the present day *Transcendental*."

"As thinkers," says Emerson, "mankind have ever divided into two sects, Materialists and Idealists; the first class founded on experience, the second on consciousness; they perceive that the senses are not final; they give us representations of things, but what are the things themselves they cannot tell. The materialist insists on facts, on history, on the force of circumstances, and the animal wants of man; the idealist, on the power of Thought and of Will, on inspiration, on miracle, on individual culture. The idealist concedes all that the other affirms,

. . . and then asks him for his grounds of assurance that things are as his senses represent them. But I, he says, affirm facts not affected by the illusions of sense, facts which are of the same nature as the faculty which reports them. . . . He does not deny the sensuous fact: by no means; but he will not see that alone."

Most of us have a philosophy of some sort, although most of us are not philosophers. We have known—have we not—country parsons not a few who had a far better philosophy than not a few men famous, and deservedly so, as original and powerful philosophers. It is common enough for men to say that Emerson was not a philosopher; and they tell us what the titles of a man's books must be, the order of his argument, and the fashion of his phrase, to make him a philosopher. They remark Emerson's own impatience with the metaphysicians. "What sensible man ever looked twice into a metaphysical book?"—to which question of his the answer is of course: He himself,—not two times, but seventy times two; for Kant and Plato and

6 The Influence of Emerson

Plotinus are metaphysicians. They say he was a poet, not a philosopher, as if one could not be the other, and as if he were not many things besides a poet. Plato was a poet. The indubitable philosophers have chosen many forms. One writes a dialogue which he calls "Phædrus" or "Alciphron," another a poem on "The Nature of Things," another a treatise on "Prior Analytics" or a "Novum Organum," another an "Epistle to the Romans," another a "City of God," another a "Summa Theologiæ," another a commentary, another a sermon, another a book on the Unknowable. The "father of philosophy" did not write at all, but talked about water or some soul or force in water as the original principle of all things. The thought and purpose, not the form and method, are what determine. The contents of poetry are as various as the forms of philosophy; and a man may be a very great poet and not properly a philosopher at all. But Dante was a philosopher, and Milton and Goethe and Browning,—in their poetry and out of it,—because their thought is concerned, as truly as Plato's or Spinoza's, with

the original principle of things, the great problems of the universe and of the soul. This was true of Emerson, and true in higher and more memorable way than of any other poet or thinker of America. He was poet plus philosopher; although he would not thank any of us for the argument, and although none surely would aver that he wrote like Locke or Leibnitz, or deny that he chose to fly where some choose to walk and some have to. In truth, as usual, so here, he has stated his own position far better than any of us could state it for him. "I think metaphysics a grammar," he said in his first lecture on "The Natural History of Intellect," "to which, once read, we seldom return. My metaphysics are to the end of use. This watching of the intellect, in season and out of season, to see the mechanics of the thing, is a little of the detective. The analytic process is cold and bereaving and, shall I say it? somewhat mean, as spying. There is something surgical in metaphysics as we treat it. Were not an ode a better form? The poet sees wholes and avoids analysis; the meta-

8 The Influence of Emerson

physician, dealing as it were with the mathematics of the mind, puts himself out of the way of the inspiration, loses that which is the miracle and creates the worship: I think that philosophy is still rude and elementary. It will one day be taught by poets. The poet is in the natural attitude; he is believing,—the philosopher, after some struggle, having only reasons for believing.” The same thought appears in his essay on Plutarch,—the thought of the menace of an exclusive devotion to metaphysics for any but the broadest minds. “We are always interested in the man who treats the intellect well. We expect it from the philosopher—from Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza and Kant; but we know that metaphysical studies in any but minds of large horizon and incessant aspiration have their dangers. One asks sometimes whether a metaphysician can treat the intellect well. The central fact is the superhuman intelligence, pouring into us from its unknown fountain, to be received with religious awe, and defended from any mixture of our will. But this high Muse comes and goes; and the

danger is that, when the Muse is wanting, the student is prone to supply its place with microscopic subtleties and logomachy." "Philosophy of the People" was the subject of one of his courses of lectures,—perhaps a development of the "First Philosophy" with which his mind was occupied the year before he published "Nature"; and philosophy of or for the people he felt must be concrete and immediately related to activity and life. "To great results of thought and morals," he said, "the steps are not many; and it is not the masters who spin the ostentatious continuity." Nevertheless, the masters do spin continuity,—some of them; and it is well for us that they do. The logic of Kant is as necessary as the insight of Emerson; and to the one Transcendentalist we pay honor as to the other.

In estimating any philosophy, there is nothing which illuminates and tests it better than its application to the distinctive tendencies and problems of the time. How do our science and society look in its light, and how does it bear theirs? The dominant

and distinctive doctrine of our time, pervading every field,—nature, physics, psychology, anthropology, history, politics, ethics, and religion,—has been the doctrine of evolution. How does the philosophy of Emerson dispose of that, and how does that deal with it?

In speaking of Emerson and the doctrine of evolution, there is, of course, no intention to imply that we have here an instance of the old antithesis between Idealism and Materialism. Emerson and Darwin, to name the name most conspicuously identified in our time with the doctrine of evolution, represent no such opposition. It is, indeed, scarcely legitimate to speak of Darwin as having to do directly with philosophy or the problem and original principle of the universe at all. He was not a philosopher, but a wise student of the processes of nature, whose results make immediately neither for nor against the principles either of Idealism or Materialism, and were urged for and against neither. Certainly do not make against Idealism, as it is not extravagant to say that Darwin's truth lies in Emerson's

philosophy as a natural and essential moment of it. Emerson is precisely a philosopher, — ever approaching the problem of the universe both from the soul-side and the nature-side, ever standing, confident and patient, in the presence of the sphinx. Much more than philosopher, but, as I have said, essentially philosopher, and our greatest, perhaps our only great, philosopher. "The poet," he says, "differs from the philosopher only herein, that the one proposes Beauty as his main end, the other Truth. But the philosopher, not less than the poet, postpones the apparent order and relations of things to the empire of thought. 'The problem of philosophy,' according to Plato, 'is, for all that exists conditionally, to find a ground unconditioned and absolute.' " And it is worthy of noting, when we think of Emerson as approaching the world-problem from the side of mind and of Darwin as a student of the principles of nature, that Emerson's own most energetic and systematic attempt to find and formulate the absolute ground of things is the essay on — not the Soul, but *Nature*.

12 The Influence of Emerson

“All that is separate from us, all which philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME,—that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body,—must be ranked under this name NATURE.”

The little book on “Nature” was Emerson’s first authentic utterance. It came a year before the address on the American Scholar, two years before the address to the Harvard Divinity School. It came the year after the publication of Strauss’s *Life of Jesus*. Yet who divined, in the hubbub of that tumbling of old sanctions, that inspiration even then was speaking at the door, fresh, faithful, positive, and jubilant, pausing not so much as to note the collapse of images, but simply speaking the word of the soul under the soul’s eternal forms, with the soul’s veritable and self-vouching accent? “The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of

theirs? Why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields."

It was a still, small voice, this little book, which came without its author's name,—still as the coming of the green in May-time,—and few heard it (five hundred copies of the book were disposed of, we are told, only after twelve years); though as many as heard and received it, to them it gave power to become the sons of God, to know themselves as such,—a knowledge which had become well-nigh lost and unauthentic in churches and among men. Its accent was almost drowned by the thunder of Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," which Emerson gave to America at the same time, to preach, in a way so different, the same Everlasting Yea.

Emerson's first authentic utterance, "Nature" is also the most sufficient expression of his general philosophy, and the noblest possible expression of a pure idealism,—to my thinking, the most penetrating speculative word yet spoken in our New World.

14 The Influence of Emerson

It could almost be wished that there might be professorships of this book, "Nature," and the correlated essays, in our colleges,—a not extravagant wish surely, when we remember in how many professor of philosophy means for the greater part of the time professor of some book so infinitely smaller and poorer, by Herbert Spencer or another Englishman or William Hamilton or another Scotchman. I think that any young man going out into life with his mind well opened to the real intension and extension of those views of Nature as Commodity, Beauty, Language, and Discipline would have more to be grateful for and wherewith to turn his chaos into cosmos than all chapters on the limits of knowledge, the rungs of the ladder, or the classes of the faculties can possibly be made to yield. What invitations everywhere, and provocations, to excursions into the history of speculation and of every science! Where should we find a more fruitful text for a Kritik of Language, which Max Müller used to tell us, with some reason, is the Kritik which our philosophy needs next? For

here we have no mere formal and punctilious thinking,—improved metric scheme of classing Aryan and Semitic roots,—but are borne directly to that primary question, why and how it is that spirit symbolizes and bodies itself in nature and in words, and what is the significance and scope of that speech which man has evoked from himself and which remains, firmly conserving his thought, while the generations pass. Only Bushnell in New England has thought with equal subtlety and fruitfulness upon this question. Where better or more natural ground from which to consider Darwinism itself and the modern statement of development? The very motto of “Nature” might well be adopted as the tersest and most pregnant text for our evolution-philosophy:—

“A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;
And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.”

We are brought by “Nature” into con-

16 The Influence of Emerson

tact with the apostolic succession of the lords of thought, from the Egyptians and the Brahmins to Bacon and Swedenborg. Brought into contact especially with the great modern Germans. They are not cited; but "Nature," written fresh from the reading of the Germans, of Coleridge and Carlyle, is so instinct with the spirit and purpose of the Transcendental Philosophy, that it were well enough to direct the mind unsatisfied with the book's own fresh and simple word, and craving statement in syllogistic *a*, *b*, *c*, and corollaries of the manner of Emerson's approach to the world-problem, to the pages of Kant and Hegel and Fichte. He takes us, in the very beginning, to where Kant leaves us in that last page of his *Ethics*. "If a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. . . . One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime." "Undoubtedly," he says, "we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far as to believe that

whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds the order of things can satisfy." "I maintain," Kant had said, in his great Kritik, "that no question referring to an object of pure reason can be insoluble for the same human reason; and that no excuse of inevitable ignorance on our side, or of unfathomable depth on the side of the problem, can release us from the obligation to answer it thoroughly and completely; because the same concept which enables us to ask the question must qualify us to answer it, considering that the object itself does not exist except in the concept." "Beauty," says Emerson in "Nature," "in its largest and profoundest sense, is one expression for the universe. God is the All-fair. Truth and goodness and beauty are but different faces of the same All." This is another utterance, if we please, of that Hegelian principle, that God is Being, Essence, Idea, and whether we say this or that is not a question of false or true, but of completer or less complete definition, a question of the gradation of circles and of the circumference and penetration of

the present thought. It should be said in general that there is almost nothing new in principle in Emerson's philosophy. We are everywhere in the same philosophic atmosphere which we breathe with Plato and Plotinus and with the post-Kantian idealists. Everything easily falls into harmony with the great Greeks and the great Germans. The fundamental principle of "The Natural History of Intellect," that "every law of nature is a law of mind," is precisely the central principle of Hegel's Logic and Philosophy of Nature, there developed and applied with a pertinacity and rigor entirely foreign to Emerson's inspirational genius. Emerson's virtue is in illumination and the immediate marriage of the truth clearly apprehended to poetry and life.

At the beginning of the chapter on Idealism in "Nature," Emerson speaks with kindness and with warmth of the extreme subjective theory, for which Fichte stood in the first period of his thought,—or, indeed, for the very illusionism of Berkeley,—and condemns the frivolous who make merry with

the theory, as if its consequences were burlesque and as if it affected the stability of nature. Fichte, viewing all human life as moral evolution, conceived the outer world as the mere ethical gymnasium provided for the mind and belonging to it by its very constitution. "A noble doubt," Emerson says, "perpetually suggests itself, whether the end of Discipline be not the Final Cause of the Universe,—and whether nature outwardly exists. It is a sufficient account of that Appearance we call the World, that God will teach a human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. What difference does it make whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul?" "To the senses and the unrenewed understanding," he says, "belongs a sort of instinctive belief in the absolute existence of nature. Things are ultimates. But the presence of Reason mars this faith. Time and space relations vanish as laws are known. The first effort of thought tends to relax

the despotism of the senses, and shows us nature aloof and, as it were, afloat." This is Hegel's *Phenomenologie* in other dialect. Turgot said, "He that has never doubted the existence of matter may be assured he has no aptitude for metaphysical inquiries." "It is the uniform effect of culture on the human mind," says Emerson, "not to shake our faith in the stability of particular phenomena,"—any distrust of the permanence of laws, he says, would paralyze the faculties of man,—“but to lead us to regard nature as a phenomenon, not a substance.” Ideas, he says,—speaking in Platonic phrase,—immortal, necessary, uncreated natures, are accessible to few men, as objects of science, although all men are capable of being raised by piety or by passion into their region; and in their presence “we think of nature as an appendix to the soul.” “Both religion and ethics,” he says, “put nature under foot. The first and last lesson of religion is, ‘The things that are seen are temporal; the things that are unseen are eternal.’”

To a pure subjective idealism, however, Emerson does not commit himself, either in

"Nature" or anywhere else. At the very beginning he saw clearly the full circle which it took Fichte his whole lifetime to describe, and the Universal Spirit, constituting and informing all individuals, as all nature, is as distinctly recognized and fundamental in this first utterance as in "Worship" and "The Over-Soul," or as in Fichte's "Way to the Blessed Life." "Idealism," he says,—subjective idealism,—“acquaints us with the total disparity between the evidence of our own being and the evidence of the world's being. The one is perfect; the other incapable of any assurance. . . . Yet, if Idealism only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. Then the heart resists it, because it balks the affections in denying substantive being to men and women. Nature is so pervaded with human life, that there is something of humanity in all, and in every particular. But this theory makes nature foreign to me, and does not account for that consanguinity which we acknowledge in it.” Its significance and value, therefore, for Emerson, are simply

this: that it serves "to apprise us of the eternal distinction between the soul and the world," vouching the mind to be of the fundamental nature of things. But a complete philosophy demands much more. Emerson's own philosophy goes much beyond. Would we have a just statement, in one word, of that philosophy, we have it in this same "Nature." I know of no other passage where so much of his fundamental thought is so well balanced and compacted as in this following:—

"Man is conscious of an universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason: it is not mine or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men. And the blue sky in which the private earth is buried, the sky with its eternal calm, and full of everlasting orbs, is the type of Reason. That which, intellectually considered, we call Reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit. Spirit is the creator. Spirit hath life in itself. And man in all ages and

countries embodies it in his language, as the FATHER."

Nature, to Emerson, "always speaks of Spirit. . . It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us." "The aspect of nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon the breast. . . . The noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it." "The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it is not, like the body, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. It is therefore, to us, a fixed point whereby we may measure our departure. We are as much strangers in nature as we are aliens from God."

This last thought Emerson returns to more than once. "Man is fallen," he says, in a later essay; "nature is erect and serves as a differential thermometer, detecting the

presence or absence of the divine sentiment in man. By fault of our dulness and selfishness we are looking up to nature, but when we are convalescent nature will look up to us. We see the foaming brook with compunction: if our own life flowed with the right energy, we should shame the brook."

An embodiment of God,—this, then, is what the universe is to Emerson. "There seems to be a necessity in spirit," he says, "to manifest itself in material forms; and day and night, river and storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali pre-exist in necessary Ideas in the mind of God, and are what they are by virtue of preceding affections in the world of spirit." "In the divine order," he says, in the address on "The Method of Nature," "intellect is primary; nature, secondary; it is the memory of the mind. That which once existed in intellect as pure law has now taken body as Nature. It existed already in the mind in solution; now, it has been precipitated, and the bright sediment is the world." This is pure Plato. Nature he views purely as the projection

and symbol of spirit. "Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact." "Every object rightly seen unlocks a new faculty of the soul." If you wish to understand intellectual philosophy, he said, study natural science. Every time you discover a law of things you discover a principle of mind. Every law of nature, he said, in his lectures on the "Natural History of the Intellect," is a law of mind; and it is quite indifferent, he said boldly, in a connection where he would not be misunderstood, whether we say "all is matter" or "all is spirit." For to him matter is all spiritualized, is spirit's other. Carlyle, it will be remembered, had a certain kindness, as opposed to the old dualism, to "your frightful theory of materialism, of man's being but a body, and therefore at least once more a unity." This, he said, may be the paroxysm which was critical, and the beginning of cure.

This thought, that everything in the phenomenal world takes place at once mechanically and metaphysically,—the source of the mechanical, however, being in the metaphysical,—was a constant and fundamental

thought with Emerson. "A perfect parallelism," he says, almost in the words of Leibnitz, and exactly in the thought of Hegel, "exists between nature and the laws of thought." "The whole of nature agrees with the whole of thought." Precisely herein, indeed, is Emerson's key to the interpretation of nature, as we shall consider more carefully. "Things are knowable," he says, in the essay on Plato, "because, being from one, things correspond. There is a scale; and the correspondence of heaven to earth, of matter to mind, of the part to the whole, is our guide." He elaborates the thought in many ways in "The Natural History of Intellect." "I believe the mind is the creator of the world, and is ever creating; that at last Matter is dead Mind; that mind makes the senses it sees with; that the genius of man is a continuation of the power that made him and that has not done making him." Again, in a passage of wonderful boldness: "As the sun is conceived to have made our system by hurling out from itself the outer rings of diffuse ether which slowly condensed into

earths and moons, by a higher force of the same law the mind detaches minds, and a mind detaches thoughts or intellections. These again all mimic in their sphericity the first mind, and share its power." As he reasons forward, so he reasons backward. "From whatever side we look at Nature we seem to be exploring the figure of a disguised man." Nature is pervaded with human nature. Man finds himself everywhere: humanity is the translator of nature and of God. Of all philosophers and theologians, he is, in a high but most real sense, the most anthropomorphic. Does he make us feel as almost no other the divinity of man? So does he see most penetratingly the humanity of God. Man is the divine revealer and interpreter. The poet, the prophet, the high thinker, the Christs of God, the completest flowerings of the divine process and life,—these are the real mediators with the divine Original.

The source of Nature in Universal Spirit, says Emerson, is betrayed by that intimate unity which so pervades all its forms as to make each particle a microcosm, which faith-

28 The Influence of Emerson

fully renders the likeness of the world. In "The Sphinx," the first poem of his first collection, thirty years before Tennyson made his most compact expression of the central truth,—

"Flower in the crannied wall, . . .
Little flower — but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is," —

Emerson had put it in this wise: —

"Through a thousand voices
Spoke the universal dame:
Who telleth one of my meanings
Is master of all I am."

"A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time," says Emerson in "Nature," "is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole." "The granite is differenced in its laws only by the more or less of heat from the river that wears it away. The river, as it flows, resembles the air that flows over it; the air resembles the light which traverses it with more subtile currents; the light resembles the heat which rides with it through space. Each creature is only a

modification of the other." To this great fact of the correlation and the transmutation of forces he returns ever,—and to the truth beyond, that all force is quickly driven where it must be spoken of ideally, in terms of thought, of will and intellect. He observes how the law of harmonic sounds reappears in the harmonic colors. He dwells with interest on the fact that that picture which we have of outer nature is no more conditioned by the landscape than by the eye itself. The structure of this it is which determines outline, color, motion, and grouping. Nature, too, is always herself plus ourselves: we are always inextricably interwoven as one element, larger or smaller, in the sum total of impression. In scientific mood we reduce the personal element to the vanishing point; but in naïve and common life nature "always wears the colors of the spirit." "The same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs is overspread with melancholy today. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. There is a kind of contempt of the landscape

30 The Influence of Emerson

felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population."

"There is nothing lucky or capricious in these analogies," says Emerson. "This relation between the mind and matter is not fancied by some poet, but stands in the will of God, and so is free to be known by all men. It appears to men, or it does not appear. A ray of relation passes from all other being to man; and neither can man be understood without these objects, nor these objects without man."

As with the intellectual, so, too, with the moral. "The laws of moral nature," says Emerson, "answer to those of matter as face to face in a glass." This thought was fundamental in his ethics, and he lost no good occasion to emphasize and urge it. It was part of that grand creed which he spoke from the platform of the Free Religious Association a generation ago: "The moral sentiment speaks to every man the law after which the universe was made." It was the last word of the famous Harvard address of 1838: "I look for the new Teacher, that

shall follow so far those shining laws, that he shall see them come full circle; shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul; shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart; and shall show that the Ought, that Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy." It is hinted in "The Preacher," which, read to the Harvard students of religion forty years after the first address, somehow echoes every sentiment of that: "The next age will recognize the true eternity of the law, its presence to you and me, its equal energy in what is called brute nature as in what is called sacred history." But the whole thought was already firmly grasped and clearly formulated in "Nature." "All things are moral," he said here, "and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature." "Every natural process is a version of a moral sentence. The moral law lies at the centre of nature and radiates to the circumference." Every chemical change, every change of vegetation, every animal function, "shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong and echo the Ten Com-

mandments." He cannot doubt that the moral sentiment which thus scents the air, grows in the grain, and impregnates the waters of the world is caught from them by man. "Who can guess," he says, "how much firmness the sea-beaten rock has taught the fisherman? how much tranquillity has been reflected to man from the azure sky, over whose unspotted deeps the winds for evermore drive flocks of stormy clouds, and leave no wrinkle or stain? how much industry and providence and affection we have caught from the pantomime of brutes?" The whole chapter upon Discipline is iteration and reiteration of this thought. Nature is a discipline, he says,—school alike for the understanding and for morals. As Fichte said, Nature is the objectified material of duty.

The notion is abroad, and is fashionable almost to the point of orthodoxy,—reports itself perennially in the newspaper and the omnibus,—that Idealism is unpractical, without hands, careless of fact, even inimical to exact science. Renan has said that every position has so much to say for itself and is

so plausible from some point that, could a man live long enough with his mind fresh and virile, he would doubtless champion successively every doctrine and belong to every sect. Thus for each one of us may be reserved the mumps-and-measles period of a believed antinomy between piety and common sense and between thought and fact. Lowell well said, with specific reference to the Pilgrim Fathers, the most energetic shipload of idealists in history, that "men anxious about their souls have not been by any means the least skilful in providing for the wants of the body"; and Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, and England say their various *Amens*. "To a sound judgment," says Emerson, "the most abstract truth is the most practical." The word of your rigorous and vigorous henchman of "fact" is: Come down from the barren heights of speculation and out of the clouds, to the firm ground of the physical and positive. Shut your *Kritik* of Reason and open your *Palæontology*, that so we may have some reliable and useful knowledge. In like manner we hear sincere and earnest men counsel, Give up belief in

34 The Influence of Emerson

God, that you may economize your forces for humanity ; give up believing in the immortal nature of you, that so you may concentrate on a new earth. They think the law of parsimony rules the soul, instead of that other, that to him that hath shall be given, and that giving is getting and qualifying for giving more. Stop this sending of gospel and schoolmaster to Asia and Africa and the black belt of Alabama, they say, and attend to the ignorance and squalor round the corner ; and they ridicule the missionary society. Yet they have to blush more than this other when asked for the census of their own neighborhood activities and self-sacrifices and for the page of their cash-book which chronicles their dealings with the local vice.

The positivist's appeal to the idealist to leave his idealism to strengthen the ranks of reform and regenerate society is irony's *ne plus ultra*. Its answer is Moses and the prophets ; its answer is Christ and the Church ; its answer is Luther and Calvin and John Knox ; its answer is Cromwell and Milton and Vane, Plymouth Rock, and Bunker Hill ; its answer is Rousseau and Turgot,

the voice of Fichte amidst Napoleon's drums, Cobden and the Corn-law Rhymer, Mazzini and Gladstone; its answer is Garrison, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the scaffold of John Brown; its answer is the Transcendental Movement in New England. Never in New England, it seems, was such a turnout of men to regenerate society as in those two decades. Each man inoculated with the "new views" straightway appears with a recipe for the divine commonwealth in his pocket. It shall come by Brook Farm, by eating potatoes, by temperance, by conventions,—a perennial Anniversary Week,—but it shall come somehow. The labor of those men and women for a new earth was as energetic as their faith in its coming was indefectible and buoyant. But for their labor and their faith the cause of reform among us would be infinitely behind where it is to-day. On the whole, it seems to some of us, in the light of our own history and thought, that, if our social reformers desiderate in the people a zeal according to knowledge, they had better pray for a new influx of Transcendentalism rather than seek to minimize what

36 The Influence of Emerson

we have. If the time ever should come when Transcendentalism should be "at bay" in America,—that is the corner where somebody in mild glee has recently been locating it,—then Reform would simply find that it had killed its goose.

The same answer which is given him who seeks to antagonize Idealism and philanthropy stands for him who seeks to show a conflict between speculation and science. The answer is Aristotle and Bacon, Descartes and Leibnitz, Kant, Goethe and Emerson. Kant, and not Laplace, was the true author of the nebular hypothesis; and his name will ultimately be identified with it as completely as Newton's with the law of gravitation. He, too, distinctly enunciated the doctrine — although he called it "a daring adventure of reason" — of the descent of all organic beings from a common original mother, as an hypothesis which "alone is in harmony with the principle of the mechanism of nature, without which a science of nature is altogether impossible." Goethe said, "Nothing could hinder me from boldly maintaining this 'adventure of reason,' as

the sage of Königsberg calls it"; and Goethe's own "Metamorphosis of Plants," his "Metamorphosis of Animals," and the whole body of his valuable works in morphology, biology, and geology are clear anticipations, and much more than anticipations, of Darwinism and our evolution theory. "What kind of God," said Goethe, "were he who impelled things only from outside, and let the universe twirl round his finger? God moves the world inwardly, cherishes nature in himself, himself in nature, so that whatever lives and works and exists in him never misses his power nor his spirit." And again: "All members form themselves according to eternal laws, and the rarest form preserves in secret the primitive type. The form determines the animal's mode of life, while, reciprocally, the mode of life reacts powerfully on all form."

Some have raised the objection that these and similar passages of Goethe are no "scientific truths," but only poetical or rhetorical flourishes and images; the type he meant was only an "ideal pro-type," no real genealogical form. "This objection," says

38 The Influence of Emerson

Professor Haeckel,—and the answer, no matter what the philosophy behind it, serves for similar objections to Emerson,—“betrays little understanding of the greatest German genius. He who is acquainted with Goethe’s thoroughly objective mode of thought, who appreciates his thoroughly living and realistic view of nature, will entertain no doubt that under that ‘type’ was intended a perfectly real descent of kindred organisms from common genealogical form.” Emerson himself, in describing the great changes which came in New England thought in the thirties and forties, and expressing the opinion that “the paramount source of the religious revolution was Modern Science,” pays special tribute to the influence of Goethe and the Germans in the matter. “Unexpected aid from high quarters came to the iconoclasts. The German poet Goethe revolted against the science of the day, against French and English science, declared war against the great name of Newton, proposed his own new and simple optics; in botany, his simple theory of metamorphosis,—the eye of a leaf is all, every

part of the plant from root to fruit is only a modified leaf, the branch of a tree is nothing but a leaf whose serratures have become twigs. He extended this into anatomy and animal life, and his views were accepted. The revolt became a revolution. Schelling and Oken introduced their ideal natural philosophy; Hegel, his metaphysics, and extended it to civil history. The result in literature and the general mind was a return to law."

This truth, that the great pioneering and revolutionizing work in science and the study of nature has so commonly been done by those who have approached the problem of the universe on the thought-side, is certainly interesting and significant. To the man who thinks, not at all a strange thing, yet something surely worth making a note of by the stickler for "facts." "Man," says Emerson, "carries the world in his head, the whole astronomy and chemistry suspended in a thought. Because the history of nature is characted in his brain, therefore is he the prophet and discoverer of her secrets. Every known fact in natural science

40 The Influence of Emerson

was divined by the presentiment of somebody, before it was actually verified." He quotes with pleasure George Herbert's quaint and pregnant lines upon man's "private amity" with the herbs and the stars. He might have quoted those lines of Milton, which Channing quotes : —

" One Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not depraved from good, created all
Such to perfection, *one first matter all*
Indued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life :
But more refined, more spirituous and pure,
As nearer to him placed or nearer tending,
Each in their several active spheres assigned,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the
leaves
More aery, last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes ; flowers and their fruit,
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual."

Paradise Lost, Book V., lines 469-485.

The Philosophy of Emerson 41

The following Platonic lines from Milton he does quote :—

“ What if earth
Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
Each to the other more like than on earth is
thought ? ”

But nothing could illustrate so strikingly the truth that the method of thought is the method of nature as what is called the “ Darwinism ” of Emerson himself,— the anticipations and clear expression everywhere of that view of development which our science has adopted and made so cardinal. Of this Darwinism in Emerson much has been made, yet not too much. Darwinism, as we have already noticed, was made the very motto of “ Nature,” twenty years before “ The Origin of Species ” was written. “ Nature ” is full of Darwinism. “ It is essential to a true theory of nature and of man,” Emerson said, “ that it should contain somewhat progressive ”; and in the essay on “ Fate ” he says, “ No statement of the universe can have any soundness which does not admit its ascending effort.” His quick interest in the questions of natural

42 The Influence of Emerson

science declares itself in "Nature" as genuinely as his interest in the soul and life. Curiously, his earliest public lectures were upon subjects in natural history,— "The Relation of Man to the Globe," "Water," etc. "Open any recent journal of science," he said in "Nature," "and weigh the problems suggested concerning Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, Physiology, Geology." But he has slight regard for that physiology or physics which merely concerns itself with particulars and heaps up facts, with no curiosity or thought concerning relations, tendency, and end. "Empirical science," he says, "is apt to cloud the sight and, by the very knowledge of functions and processes, to bereave the student of the manly contemplation of the whole." "There are far more excellent qualities in the student," he says, "than preciseness and infallibility. It is not so pertinent to man to know all the individuals of the animal kingdom as it is to know whence and whereto is this tyrannizing unity in his constitution, which evermore separates and classifies things, endeavoring to reduce the

most diverse to one form. When I behold a rich landscape, it is less to my purpose to recite correctly the order and superposition of the strata than to know why all thought of multitude is lost in a tranquil sense of unity. I cannot greatly honor minuteness in details so long as there is no hint to explain the relation between things and thoughts; no ray upon the *metaphysics* of conchology, of botany, of the arts, to show the relation of the forms of flowers, shells, animals, architecture, to the mind, and build science upon ideas."

The exact sciences were not Emerson's favorite field, and what mathematics he had cost him "hours of melancholy." But he had that primary merit of the scientific man which consists in fronting fact and truth confidently and without reserve, in declining anxiety about any immediate inconsistencies which appear during research and change, and in refusing to accept or approve as known anything which is not known. "The moment you putty and plaster your expressions to make them hang together," he said to a young friend, "you have begun

a weakening process. Take it for granted the truths will harmonize; and, as for the falsities and mistakes, they will speedily die of themselves." "I do not wish," he said to Frederika Bremer, "that people should pretend to know or to believe more than they really do know and believe." Applying this to the discussion of immortality,— "we carry the pledges of this in our own breast," — he maintained that "we cannot say in what form or in what manner our existence will be continued." "He is faithful," comments Miss Bremer, "to the law in his own breast, and speaks out the truth which he inwardly recognizes. He does right. By this means he will prepare the way for a more true comprehension of religion and of life."

Emerson remarks upon "that wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world — of which he is the lord, not because he is the most subtile inhabitant, but because he is its head and heart, and finds something of himself in every great and small thing." This view, thus clear and explicit at the very beginning, in the pages

of "Nature," becomes ever more pronounced and prominent in his maturer thought. Half a dozen years later he says: "We can point nowhere to anything final, but tendency appears on all hands; planet, system, constellation, total nature is growing like a field of maize in July, is becoming somewhat else. The embryo does not more strive to be man than yonder burr of light we call a nebula tends to be a ring, a comet, a globe, and a parent of new suns." This process of evolution, he says, "publishes itself in creatures, reaching from particles to spicula, through transformation on transformation, to the highest symmetries, arriving at consummate results without a shock or a leap. . . . How far off is the trilobite, how far the quadruped! How inconceivably remote is man! All duly arrive, and then race after race of men. It is a long way from granite to oyster; farther yet to Plato, and the preaching of the immortality of the soul. Yet all must come, as surely as the first atom has two sides." This, note, twenty years before men heard of Darwinism. "In ignorant ages," says

46 The Influence of Emerson

Emerson, "it was common to vaunt the human superiority by underrating the instinct of other animals. Better discernment finds that the only difference is of less and more." Again, "'Tis a long scale from the gorilla to the gentleman,—from the gorilla to Plato, Newton, Shakespeare,—to the sanctities of religion, to the refinements of legislation, the summits of science, art, and poetry. The beginnings are slow and infirm, but 'tis an always accelerated march."

Passages of this sort could of course be multiplied indefinitely. The reference in "Bacchus" to the ascent of life from form to form still remains incomparable, as Mr. Stedman has observed, for terseness and poetic illumination:—

"I, drinking this,
Shall hear far Chaos talk with me;
Kings unborn shall walk with me;
And the poor grass shall plot and plan
What it will do when it is man."

Lines in "Woodnotes" put the same in different phrase. Perhaps the most defi-

nite and sufficient statement of the doctrine by Emerson is that in the second essay on Plato. "Modern science," he said here,—this was ten years before Darwin,—“by the extent of its generalizations has learned to indemnify the student of man for the defects of individuals, by tracing growth and ascent in races, and, by the simple expedient of lighting up the vast background, generates a feeling of complacency and hope. The human being has the saurian and the plant in his rear. His arts and sciences, the easy issue of his brain, look glorious when prospectively beheld from the distant brain of ox, crocodile, and fish. It seems as if nature, in regarding the geologic night behind her, when, in five or six milleniums, she has turned out five or six men, as Homer, Phidias, Menu, and Columbus, was nowise discontented with the result. These samples attested the virtue of the tree. These were a clear amelioration of trilobite and saurus, and a good basis for further proceeding. With this artist, time and space are cheap, and she is insensible to what you say of tedious preparation.

48 The Influence of Emerson

She waited tranquilly the flowing periods of palæontology for the hour to be struck when man should arrive."

"It is a misconception," says John Morley, "to pretend that Emerson was a precursor of the Darwinian theory"; and he emphasizes the special character of Darwin's scientific hypothesis. "Evolution, as a possible explanation of the ordering of the universe," he says, "is a great deal older than either Emerson or Darwin." None knew that better than Emerson himself; and before he was twenty years old he wrote of "the circumstance which almost invariably attends the promulgation of a philosophical theory, — that authors start up to prove its antiquity, and that it is the identical theory which Pythagoras, Plato, or Epicurus propounded before." The point of interest here is that Emerson spoke about evolution in entirely new phrase; and it was no mere "good fortune" by which his strong propositions harmonize with "the new and most memorable drift of science which set in by his side," as Mr. Morley clearly recognizes they do. It was the "fatal gift of penetra-

tion" which enabled him to see and to proclaim early and in universals that which was in the air and which Darwin presently should avouch in particulars.

If Idealism be a true philosophy, then it was but natural and regular that Emerson should see and say this betimes. If Darwinism be a true theory of the origin of species and the descent of man, then this insight and conclusion bear notable witness to the primary virtue and validity of Emerson's method. Indeed, if we consider, upon what presupposition are this insight and conclusion, if they be true, so likely and so clear as upon his?

"The possibility of interpretation," he says, "lies in the identity of the observer with the observed. Each material thing has its celestial side; has its translation, through humanity, into the spiritual and necessary sphere." "The reason why man knows about them is that he is of them; he has just come out of nature, or from being a part of that thing." "I announce the good of being interpenetrated by the mind that made nature; this benefit, namely, that it

50 The Influence of Emerson

can understand nature, which it made and maketh. Nature is good, but intellect is better: as the law-giver is before the law-receiver." In religion it is the thought of what may best be named the humanity of God. With sympathy he quotes the word of George Fox, that, "though he read of Christ and God, he knew them only from the like spirit in his own soul." The human is the door to the divine.

Intellect is the supernatural, the creator and the sap of nature. Intellect is the divine, it is the mind in man. "Man must look at nature with a supernatural eye," says Emerson. "Every natural fact is an emanation. Not the cause, but an ever novel effect, nature descends always from above. The beauty of these fair objects is imparted into them from a metaphysical and eternal spring. In all animal and vegetable forms, no chemistry, no mechanics, can account for the facts; but a mysterious principle of life must be assumed, which not only inhabits the organ, but makes the organ." This is the metaphysics of evolution, its philosophy, with Emerson.

And what of man in nature,—what of the mind? We are brought by this word to Emerson's point of view. Man is the projection of God in the self-conscious. "The foundations of man," says Emerson, "are not in matter, but in spirit"; and "the element of spirit is eternity." "Man pretends to give account of himself to himself, but at last what has he to recite but the fact that there is a Life not to be described or known otherwise than by possession? What account can he give of his essence more than *so it was to be*? The *royal* reason, the Grace of God, seems the only description of our multiform but ever identical fact."

"A God-intoxicated man" is a term which might be applied to Emerson as justly as it was applied to Spinoza. It is an impressive account which Mr. Woodbury gives of the meditation and discussion up under the shadow of Greylock, in which Emerson, after a long pause, exclaimed, lifting his head, "God? It is all God!"—marvelling how any thinker contemplating the universe could hold otherwise. But he was not a pantheist, although Theodore Parker was quite wrong

in saying that "no man is farther from it." There is almost no great modern religious thinker in whom the pantheistic element is so large ; but he is always the theist, always thoughtful of the personality, the consciousness, and the response. His pages throb with multiplied expressions of it. Has any believer in the personality of God, well asks Whipple in one of his Emerson essays, ever hit upon a better definition than "Conscious Law," in that inspired line in "Woodnotes,"—"Conscious Law is King of kings?" Indeed there is not in all of Emerson's pages a loftier, more poetic, or more philosophic expression of his conception of evolution in its divine genesis and eternal energy than the page which ends with this great line.

"I praise with wonder," he says, "this great reality, this Supreme Presence, which seems to drown all things in the deluge of its light. What man, seeing this, can lose it from his thoughts, or entertain a meaner subject? The entrance of this into his mind seems to be the birth of man. We cannot describe the natural history of the soul, but we know

that it is divine. I cannot tell if these wonderful qualities which house to-day in this mortal frame shall ever reassemble in equal activity in a similar frame, or whether they have before had a natural history like that of this body; but this one thing I know, that these qualities did not now begin to exist, cannot be sick with my sickness, nor buried in any grave; but that they circulate through the Universe: before the world was, they were. Nothing can bar them out, or shut them in; they penetrate the ocean and land, space and time, form and essence, and hold the key to universal nature. I draw from this faith courage and hope. All things are known to the soul. It is not to be surprised by any communication. Nothing can be greater than it."

"Every scripture is to be interpreted by the same spirit which gave it forth,"—this, observes Emerson, is the fundamental law of criticism. And is it not apparent that all man's efforts to interpret the universe are at once vain and inexplicable, unless it be that he himself is of the same spirit which gave forth the universe, and eternally gives

54 The Influence of Emerson

forth? The fact that man "doth philosophize, and must," must ever ask the questions which have their answers in infinity, is the blazing evidence of his oneness with the Mind by which the worlds are and were created.

And that which is implied by speculation is also vouched by freedom and the infinite transformation wrought by Will. "The world," says Emerson, "yields itself passive to the educated Will." "From the child's successive possession of his several senses up to the hour when he saith, 'Thy will be done!' he is learning the secret, that he can reduce under his will, not only particular events, but great classes, nay, the whole series of events, and so conform all facts to his character." Fate is unpenetrated cause. The water drowns ship and sailor, like a grain of dust; but learn to swim, trim your bark, and the wave which drowned it will carry it. "Steam, till the other day, was the devil which we dreaded; but Worcester, Watt, and Fulton bethought themselves that, where was power, was not devil, but was God. Could he lift pots and

roofs so handily, he was the workman they were in search of. The opinion of the million was the terror of the world ; and it was attempted to hold it down with a layer of soldiers, over that a layer of lords, and a king on the top. But the Fultons and Watts of politics, by satisfying the million, have made of this terror the most harmless and energetic form of a State." "Every solid in the universe is ready to become fluid on the approach of the mind ; and the power to flux it is the measure of the mind. . . . One after another, man's victorious thought comes up with and reduces all things, until the world becomes, at last, only a realized will — the double of the man."

"Intellect annuls Fate," says Emerson. "So far as a man thinks, he is free." I find it difficult to understand, in spite of the unrelieved determinism that to-day dominates and charms so many moralists and philosophic men, how one can see this doctrine of freedom challenged without jealousy, so fundamental does it appear to the intellectual process and to the interpretation and the very fact of the moral life. The vehemence

56 The Influence of Emerson

of the denial of free will by Luther and Calvin and many great religious minds is indeed known to us ; and the subtlety and energy of the theologians' arguments we recognize and deeply feel. They would emphasize Providence, they would humble themselves entirely, they would empty themselves of all claim to merit, and know themselves only as chosen instruments through which God works his purposes. But freedom makes all the reverence and humility and grace and sonship and discipleship greater, and not less. Indeed, if we will ponder, are these even possible save as our wills are ours to make them God's? I lately read a paper by a thoughtful man, in opposition to the principle that the freedom of the will is the corner-stone of ethics, and marvelled at the argument, to which Grote and Voltaire and John Fiske were all made to contribute. "The free agent" was grotesquely defined, in the language of Grote, as "one who can neither feel himself accountable nor be rendered accountable." "If the volition of agents be not influenced by motives," it was said,—and who of us would

dream of denying so trivial a truism?—"the whole machinery of law becomes unavailing, and punishment a purposeless infliction of pain." "If, when a robber is executed," so Voltaire was cited here, "his accomplice, who sees him suffer, has the liberty of not being frightened at the punishment, he will go from the foot of the scaffold to assassinate on the high-road; if, struck with horror, he experiences an insurmountable terror, the punishment of his companion will become useful to him, and moreover prove to society that his will is not free." "Substitute for the unmeaning phrase, 'freedom of the will,' " Mr. Fiske was quoted as saying, "the accurate phrase, 'lawlessness of volition,' and the theory already looks less plausible." "To write history," so Mr. Fiske was also quoted, "on any method furnished by the free-will doctrine would be utterly impossible." Surely, one could but say, Mr. Fiske could never have said this, save in his apprentice period. The expression does occur in his "Cosmic Philosophy." But the unfortunate word gives no adequate idea of the purpose of the chapter, which is

to show the lawful power of motives. To whoever is inclined to look upon the reasoning of Buckle as "equally legitimate and conclusive with that of Darwin," another contention of the critic, Mr. Fiske's own essay upon Buckle's fallacies may be commended; and, surely, the history of America, which Mr. Fiske has done so much to illuminate, can be based on no other doctrine than that of freedom. "Does the reading of history make us fatalists?" says Emerson. "What courage does not the opposite opinion show! A little whim of will to be free gallantly contending against the universe of chemistry."

"Substitute the accurate term *lawlessness* for *freedom*, and the theory already looks less plausible!" Substitute *lawlessness* for *freedom*! Substitute Preston Brooks for Charles Sumner, substitute Alcibiades for Plato, and Judas for Saint John! The confusion is a monstrous one. Is the lawless State the free State,—or the State where law is perfect and supreme? Who is the free citizen? Is it a Lincoln or a Gladstone, whose speech on each month's prob-

lem we confidently prophesy, by knowledge of the self-determined law of his mind,—or is it the Jingo of the music-hall, whose whim next week or the week after is quite incalculable? Is it the obedient citizen, or the capricious and he who does not feel himself accountable? As most of us understand it, this is he who finds himself in jail.

Voltaire's identification of freedom with caprice, with insulation from influences, from motives and causality is a trivial thinking. Carlyle's judgment, that "there is not one great thought in all Voltaire's six and thirty quartos," was a judgment too severe; but few will not own that he was "shallow" upon occasion, when they find him adducing the fact that the sight of a hanging frightens a would-be murderer as a proof that the will is not free! This line of thought — and it is common, indeed — proceeds upon failure to analyze and define motive. Stocks and stones have no motives, and beasts and idiots next to none. Motives multiply, grow definite, and grow imperative precisely as freedom grows; and

60 The Influence of Emerson

the completer the freedom, the greater the contribution of the mind to its own motive. My motive is not apart from me: it is of me. I share in the creation of my motive, and this more and more with the evolution of my freedom. "Will, pure and perceiving," says Emerson, "is not wilfulness. When a man, through stubbornness, insists to do this or that, something absurd or whimsical, only because he will, he is weak; he blows with his lips against the tempest." "If we thought men were free in the sense that in a single exception one fantastical will could prevail over the law of things, it were all one as if a child's hand could pull down the sun." "Let us build altars," he said, "to the Beautiful Necessity, which rudely or softly educates man to the perception that there are no contingencies—that Law rules throughout existence." "If we give it the high sense in which the poets use it, even thought itself is not above Fate: that, too, must act according to eternal laws, and all that is wilful and fantastic in it is in opposition to its fundamental essence."

Man may choose as he will, but he chooses

the wrong at his peril, his error or his sin in no wise earning deference from the moral nature of things; and the problem set to man is to gladly will the universal, not to do somehow that which gravitation and the Ought command,—that he must do somehow, or be ground up,—but to do it voluntarily, in the perceiving of its infallible excellence and oneness with the deep base of the life. “Thank God,” said Lessing,—he who said, in its place, that deep correlative word, “No man must must,” — “that I must, must do the right.” Herein only is freedom,—in obedience, in harmony with right. “The law of liberty,” says Saint Paul. “Our wills are ours,” says Tennyson, in his line, “to make them thine.” “The last lesson in life,” says Emerson, in “Worship,” using almost Spinoza’s word, “is a voluntary obedience, a necessitated freedom.” “Morals,” he says, “is the direction of the will on universal ends.” But “morals implies freedom and will. The will constitutes the man.”

Mr. Cabot states Emerson’s position in these words: “When man submits his will

62 The Influence of Emerson

to the Divine inspiration, he becomes a creator in the finite. If he is disobedient, if he would be something in himself, he finds all things hostile and incomprehensible." I quote this passage especially because it is one which an accomplished English critic, Mr. John M. Robertson, in an acute and valuable essay upon Emerson, marred by some curious complacencies about theism and atheism, singles out as the acme of inconsistency. He accepts it as truly representing Emerson, but exclaims, "How in the name of reason can a human phenomenon be disobedient to the Universal Will?" The question itself ignores the central and fundamental fact in Emerson's conception of man. Man is not a phenomenon; and, if we must choose between calling the mind primarily intellect or will, we must say will. "The free-will or Godhead of men" Emerson speaks of. A phenomenon can be neither dutiful nor undutiful; and the obedience of a machine does not constitute morality, but only the obedience of will, and that precisely because it can decline obedience. Morals implies freedom, Emerson

says, as the immediate consciousness and common sense of men have said from the beginning, and the profoundest philosophy from Plato and Aristotle on to Emerson. We need no Kant to prove it by formulas of metaphysics. What else mean the words *responsible, blame, retribution, indignation*? Why else this difference in kind between my feeling toward this stinging viper and that toward this selfish coward or false friend? Aristotle's simple old argument, in his "Ethics," for the free will and consequent responsibility of man, by appeal first to our own consciousness, and secondly to the fact that in society we treat each other as free agents, and must do it, whatever our theory, has never been laid nor transcended yet, and is not likely to be in a hurry. But I know of no profounder word upon this old knot of freedom and necessity than that of Emerson, in the essay on "Fate." I think of no word so profound as this, no metaphysic of ethics so great,—a system of ethics it is *in posse*,—save, in somewhat, that of Kant's great Kritik. A complete survey of Emerson's

64 The Influence of Emerson

philosophy must give a cardinal place to his ethics. I do not here develop at length the ethical side, because I have done it elsewhere.* I know of no other thinker who so luminously points out the way to the solution of the sundry antinomies, their reconciliation in a higher synthesis, as Emerson. Freedom and necessity, unity and personality, individualism and commonwealth, transcendence and immanence,—as we come into “intimater intimacy” with the mind of Emerson, the old puzzles puzzle less and less, and we learn to verify and chart what he discovers and declares. Nowhere is the reconciling synthesis more impressive or more useful, more necessary for these times, than in the field of ethics. The reconciliation is between the evolution of institutions and the categorical imperative, between, if we please, Herbert Spencer and Immanuel Kant. Emerson fronts a kinder and more co-operant universe than Kant. Morals, he said while yet a mere boy, and in ever firmer accent with the years, consti-

*Address upon “Emerson’s Ethics,” published in the volume of Concord Lectures upon “The Genius and Character of Emerson.”

tutes the "health integrity" of the universe; and morals is the health of the soul, the activity befitting and commanding its nature. The moral development of man is his process, prompted by inspiration and imperative from within and from without, toward realization and obedience of the central law of his own being, in which obedience he finds freedom and efficiency and himself. The "data of ethics" and sundry observations of most of the moral philosophers of evolution would be to the mind of Emerson mere notes of results and processes, with the purpose and dynamics still left to be explained. The first principles of the Kantian ethics, the three cardinal doctrines of the *Kritik of Practical Reason*, never received such powerful summary statement as in Emerson's famous lines: —

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
The youth replies, *I can*."

Here is the categorical imperative; and here the assurance, *Thou canst, because*

66 The Influence of Emerson

thou shalt,—because thou oughtest. Obligation measures and defines capacity and freedom; and the absoluteness of the obligation illumines and defines the two great presuppositions,—the grandeur of the eternal nature thus commanded, and the completeness of the divine support and guarantee.

Nature is no sentimentalist to Emerson. He believes in no “pistareen Providence, which, whenever the good man wants a dinner, makes that somebody shall knock at his door and leave a half-dollar.” It is of no use, he says, to “dress up that terrific benefactor in the clean shirt and white neckcloth of a student in divinity.” The world “will not mind drowning a man or woman.” Nor is there any underrating of external influence or circumstance by Emerson. “Every spirit makes its house,” he says; “but afterwards the house confines the spirit.” “How shall a man escape from his ancestors?” “At the corner of the street you read the possibility of each passenger, in the facial angle.” “A crudity in the blood will appear in the argument; a hump in the shoulder will appear in the

speech and handiwork." You cannot make a poet of "that little fatty face, pig-eye, and squat form." "The election often goes, probably, by avoirdupois weight—and it might be speedier to take the parties to the hay-scales than to the ballot-box." Circumstance, nature, the thick skull, is half. "The book of Nature is the book of Fate." Whatever limits us we call Fate; and limitation runs through entire nature. Fate is organization tyrannizing over character. "But if Fate is so prevailing, man also," says Emerson, "is part of it, and can confront fate with fate. History is the action and reaction of these two—Nature and Thought. Man cannot blink the free will. To hazard the contradiction, freedom is necessary. If you please to plant yourself on the side of Fate, and say Fate is all; then we say, a part of Fate is the freedom of man. Intellect annuls Fate. So far as a man thinks, he is free. He who sees through the design presides over it, and must will that which must be. If the wall remain adamant, it accuses the want of thought. The one serious and formidable

thing in nature is a will." "'Tis written on the gate of heaven," he quotes from Persian Hafiz, "'Woe unto him who suffers himself to be betrayed by Fate!'"

"It is wholesome to man to look not at Fate," Emerson says, "but the other way: the practical view is the other." This takes us back to that place in "Nature" where he declared the advantage of the ideal theory to be that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind, the view approved alike by philosophy and by virtue. And it indicates the primary principle of his method of reform, whether dealing with appetite or crime. We have seen how fully he recognizes the power of environment and circumstance. Environment itself is the creation of thought, and it is ultimately and essentially in the control of thought. It is right and signally important that we should direct our efforts to the amelioration of circumstance, that so those results which conform to the results of virtue may be facilitated and made more constant. Indeed, this fact, that the melioration of circumstance is also in man's power

and is his prescribed task, bears the same witness to his freedom as his triumph over circumstance. It is analogous to the creation of motive, if, indeed, it be not a part of that process. It is the triumph over circumstance,—only in broader circle, and vicarious in somewhat. But this triumph over circumstance in every circle is the command of virtue, and the teaching of its necessity and possibility is the cardinal ethical truth of the ideal theory. Above and below and within those seven ancestors wrapped up in thy skin — however we quibble and hedge, this is the fatal, inescapable rescript alike of common sense and high philosophy — is that new thing which thou art; and this, and not chiefly those, is responsible for thy depravity and fall. Thou art the doer of this wrong, and not thy father rather; and deviltry is not all one with dyspepsia. It were not possible for Emerson to write Carlyle's essay on the Model Prison; but in his vocabulary also *sinner* and *scoundrel* and *scamp* were not yet obsolete words nor synonyms of *invalid*.

The doctrine of evolution, the perception

of the law of evolution working on and upward through all nature and through human society, is one of the most fertilizing and inspiring facts in the whole history of science. A doctrine apprehended and vaguely propounded at various times in the long history of thought, it is peculiarly and definitely a doctrine of our own time, and its distinctive scientific doctrine. It was its misfortune that it came into prominence at a time when in England and Germany there prevailed a poor, mechanical philosophy, and that with this it became identified. I have spoken elsewhere of the mischief wrought by this unhappy alliance to the cause of ethics and religion. The opposition of the churches and religious men to the new truth, by which in the fierce conflict they were routed again and again, and could not fail to be conscious of the defeats, had its deep warrant; for the new truth was half-truth, and the half which was lacking was the half which they held with their falsehood, and the most necessary half. In America it was not until the publication of Mr. Fiske's little treatise upon "The Destiny of Man"

—first read, it is interesting to remember, at the Concord School of Philosophy, which was so dear to Emerson, and of which he may be said to have been the inspirer—that the doctrine was stated in a form which satisfied the imperative religious and poetical demands of men, and was subsumed under a worthy and measurably satisfying philosophy. Religion and poetry to-day have no quarrel with the doctrine of evolution. In history, economics and politics the reconciliation is more dilatory; and it is questionable whether it is not in these fields that the mischief has been greatest. The prostitution of political ideals which America and England witnessed as the century closed would never have been possible but for the subtle and pervasive poisoning of the popular consciousness by partial and false doctrines of the principle and character of evolution. Catch-words about “survival of the fittest,” and notions that the fittest are the strongest and that science had put its imprimatur upon the history of evolution as a history of remorseless competition and chartered dominion by the “select,”—these

have done, and will continue to do, their fatal work. But this is not the true philosophy of evolution. That philosophy comprehends altruism also, and gives its scientific exhibition the larger place, even as it holds the larger and ever-increasing place in life. Severe, indeed, has the long conflict been, if ever less savage; and the trail of blood is over the forest and over the nations. Who has phrased this side of it more strongly than Emerson in his lines in "The World-Soul"? But through all creation and from remotest beginnings, the sacrifice of strong to weak, the mother's love, the mutual aid, the social impulse have been along with the struggle and the selfishness, have ever kept the superior influence, thus alone making life and evolution possible, and containing the sure potency and promise of fruition in the State whose ethics shall be those of hearth and home, and in the family of nations, the federation of the world.

It is the idealists, and they alone, who have been able so to interpret evolution in its bearings upon politics and human history. A hundred years before John Fiske, at the

Concord School of Philosophy, gave to the doctrine of evolution a statement satisfying to religion, Immanuel Kant, in his great essay on "The Natural Principle of Political Order," surveyed the movement of nature and of human history, seeing the whole as a ceaseless process of beneficent evolution, and seeking to determine its final end. Said Kant: "All the capacities implanted in a creature by nature are destined to unfold themselves, completely and conformably to their end, in the course of time. . . . In man, as the only rational creature on earth, those natural capacities which are directed toward the use of his reason could be completely developed only in the species, and not in the individual. . . . The means which nature employs to bring about the development of all the capacities implanted in men is their mutual antagonism in society; but only so far as this antagonism becomes at length the cause of an order among them that is regulated by law. . . . The history of the human race, viewed as a whole, may be regarded as the realization of a hidden plan of nature to bring about a perfect political constitution,

as the only state in which all the capacities implanted by her in mankind can be fully developed." "The idea of human history," he adds, "viewed as founded upon the assumption of a universal plan in nature, gives us a new ground of hope, opening up to us a consoling view of the future, in which the human race appears in the far distance as having worked itself up to a condition in which all the germs implanted in it by nature will be fully developed and its destiny here on earth fulfilled. Such a *justification of nature* — or rather, let us say, of *Providence* — is no insignificant motive for choosing a particular point of view in contemplating the course of the world. For what avails it to magnify the glory and wisdom of the creation in the irrational domain of nature, and to recommend it to devout contemplation, if that part of the great display of the supreme wisdom which presents the end of it all in the history of the human race is to be viewed as only furnishing perpetual objections to that glory and wisdom?"

Our New World Transcendentalist would put the same question; as he, too, saw and

said that the fact that a theory meets the mind's high demands, serves the positive ends, and makes things fall into order instead of into discord is a persuasive attestation of its virtue and its truth. He described in a moment and at the beginning the whole course from "The Origin of Species" to "The Destiny of Man" and beyond. A dozen years after Darwin startled the theologians he would have used the same serene words which he used a dozen years before it or would have used a dozen years before that: "We have a better opinion of the economy of nature than to fear that those varying phases which humanity presents ever leave out any of the grand springs of human action. Mankind for the moment seem to be in search of a religion. The Jewish *cultus* is declining: the Divine or, as some will say, the truly Human hovers, now seen, now unseen, before us." The period was "propitious to those who believe that man need not fear the want of religion, because they know his religious constitution,—that he must rest on the moral and religious sentiments, as the motion of

bodies rests on geometry. In the rapid decay of what was called religion, timid and unthinking people fancy a decay of the hope of man. But the moral and religious sentiments meet us everywhere, alike in markets as in churches. . . . The conscience of man is regenerated as is the atmosphere, so that society cannot be debauched. The health which we call Virtue is an equipoise which easily redresses itself, and resembles those rocking-stones which a child's finger can move, and a weight of many hundred tons cannot overthrow." It is to religion peculiarly that he applies the law of evolution, and with results which do not bring dismay, but joy and re-enforcement. "The Author of Nature has not left himself without a witness in any sane mind," was the first article of that great creed which he recited from the platform of the Free Religious Association in 1869; and two years before that, he said in the same place, contrasting that strong consciousness with the "mortifying puerilities" which abound in religious history and with which men have propped their feeble faith, "As soon as every man

is apprised of the Divine presence within his own mind,—is apprised that the perfect law of duty corresponds with the laws of chemistry, of vegetation, of astronomy, as face to face in a glass; that the basis of duty, the order of society, the power of character, the wealth of culture, the perfection of taste, all draw their essence from this moral sentiment, then we have a religion that exalts, that commands all the social and all the private action.” “There is a fear,” he said elsewhere, “that pure truth, pure morals, will not make a religion for the affections.” This fear was foolish, because, as he saw well, biography and history and poetry ever wait on inspiration and in good time bring the ivy. “Whenever the sublimities of character shall be incarnated in a man, we may rely that law and love and insatiable curiosity will follow his steps.” The history of all in the past which makes just appeal to reverence and devotion is secure, a permanent possession; and new canonizations can only make us richer, and not poorer. No true divinity or saint can ever become less; but no universal truth of God can ever be long

dependent, and it can never be contingent, upon any individual bearer or embodiment of it. "There was a time when Christianity existed in one child; but, if the child had been killed by Herod, would the element have been lost? God sends his message, if not by one, then quite as well by another. When the Master of the Universe has ends to fulfil, he impresses his will on the structure of minds." There are those who think that but for Jesus the cardinal truths and influences of what we call, and properly call, Christianity would not be present among men. The rejection of this view, as concerns not only Christianity, but every great movement in history, in no way derogates from the praise or merit of the thinker or the doer who stands at the forefront of the movement, or from the charm and inspiration of the heroic and prophetic life. It simply affirms that universal truths of God and the supply of humanity's cardinal demands are superior to contingency. We find that the development of monotheism among the Greeks follows much the same course as its development among the He-

brews, the independent parallel lines having their origin and impulse in the common mind of man. We may not believe that, had there been no first Columbus, there would have been no second; that, had there been no Kant, Fichte and Hegel would not somehow have spoken; without Adams and Jefferson, no articulation of the demand for independence; without Garrison and Lincoln, no emancipation. None the less do we keep the saints' days, and celebrate the actual pioneers and heroes. Many currents converge in the great man and movement, and diverge from them. The currents are numerous and calculable almost in ratio of the greatness; and the great soul most reverently recognizes its mediatorship and inspiration, its obligations to the past and their commandment for fulfilment. Emerson himself speaks of the seven or eight ancestors rolled up in each other's skin, whom a man feels and represents, and who contribute their variety of notes to that new piece of music which his life is; and as of his personal inheritance, so he would have spoken of the intellectual and spiritual,

80 The Influence of Emerson

while recognizing in wonder and awe that original and extra element, in no way to be accounted for but by "the royal reason." Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emerson, with all reverence for the direct inspiration of the gods, knows well and piously witnesses how much in him is his grandfather and his father, and how the compounding with his own nature of the influence of Apollonius and Rusticus and Maximus was what had given him moral dignity, freedom from superstition, love of philosophy, and steadiness of purpose. And so Jesus, most synthetic, inspiring and divine among the sons of men, would warn us, when intellectual praise is intemperate and distorted, to bethink us of Hosea and Isaiah, of Plato and Zeno and Philo, to remember that the mind of his time was surcharged with the elements precipitated in him with such revolutionary power and charm, and not to doubt that even without him God would somehow have found his Pauls and Johns, his Augustines and Bernards, his Calvins and Channings, to bear the message of divine love and incarnation to the human race

The Philosophy of Emerson 81

With the churches of his time, Emerson came into opposition; but the ground of his opposition concerned what was accidental and extrinsic. "I object to the claim of miraculous dispensation,—certainly not to the *doctrine* of Christianity." The miraculous claim, to his mind, "impaired the soundness of him who makes it; . . . it is contrary to that law of nature which all wise men recognize, never to require a larger cause than is necessary to the effect." It confounded Christianity with "the fables of every popular religion." We know divine things only by the like spirit in ourselves, and are repelled by any effort to enforce acceptance of them by wonders or anything extraneous or official instead of by pure sympathy. The attempt to elevate Christ out of humanity "takes his teachings out of logic and out of nature," and distrust of the story prompts distrust of the doctrine.

Emerson's opposition to the miraculous theory was precisely that of Kant, who in his "Religion of Reason" exhibited so convincingly that it is favorable neither to ethics nor to faith. Churches have based belief in

the immortality of the soul upon Christ's resurrection, pronouncing the faith vain without this. But the physical resurrection of a supernatural Christ no more gives assurance of the resurrection of the common man than the fact that Christ raises Lazarus from the dead proves that Matthew and Mark could do it, or you and I. So the perfect life of a being whose nature transcends ours has not the incitement nor imperative for us of the less perfect life of one who, howsoever transcending us in spiritual insight and moral worth, is still of the same nature, having the same essential roots in the Divine. The historical justification of the miraculous theory is indeed evident and strong. By such particularization the general mind is leavened and lifted to the perception of the wonder of the world and the spirituality of man. Until this perception becomes reliable and influential in its universal application, the particular object-lesson will continue to be distorted. The over-emphasis is nature's way out of no emphasis. It is easy to say that men should cease speaking of sacred and profane his-

tory; but it is also easy and common for men to cease the distinction by making all history profane. Until we learn to see that all is sacred, that the sacred is perennial, and that John Calvin and John Milton and the "Mayflower" men are also Bible men, so long the "Jewish cultus" or another must go on, and Josias, Obadiah, and the siege of Ai weary the educated man by their exaggerated prominence. The miracle will not "fade out of history" till "faith and wonder and the primal earth" are not alone "born into the world with every child," but are of all men known to be. The slow ages, keeping their many steeds abreast, attend efficiently to the conservations. We do not need, any of us, to connive at the illusions and delays, although some of the anxious faithless seem to think it. If the Daughters of Time can be at once "hypocritic" and innocent, none of us can be: we cannot be naïve by calculation. The highest skill for each of us is simple truth, and we may safely leave it to the divinities to weave our thread rightly into the great pattern. This was the confidence of Emerson. The highest churchman and

84 The Influence of Emerson

the stoutest champion of infallibility are not equally serene, equally neighborly with the past and its oracles, or equally reposeful in the future. Nowhere are the religious postulates so firm, yet nowhere is such concord with the scientific process. He has no need to interpose checks or diversions. New Orthodoxies rise with their "Christo-centric" theories, thinking to eat their cake and keep it too, putting slights on miracle at the same time that they put it to use. They have never learned to define Man, nor seen what the definition involves. They think of men; and, even as concerns sin itself, they have not taken in the full philosophy of the parable of the prodigal son. Emerson sees clearly the fatuity of all this thinking. It will go on until men know their real nature as it is, and as Christ knew it; so long especially as the apprehension and virtue of the soul's divinity are menaced and shadowed by "the puppyism" — it was the most scornful word to which Emerson was ever moved — "of a pretension of looking down on the head of all human culture, setting up against Jesus Christ every little

self magnified." "It behooves the lover of God to love that lover of God," he said with his great emphasis when he suspected popular reaction from exaggeration to profaneness; and as against any vulgar definitions he would have been patient with the age of superstition till the age of rational reverence came. The religious mind demands the objective; and mankind does well to glorify attainment while on its way to the sanctity of a true understanding of its own essence and potentiality. But Emerson well knew that the emphatic and peculiar features of the Church's ancient system, its bibliology, cosmology, penology, eschatology and fellow ologies, its Christology with the rest, were doomed, the moment it was seen that Eden, in the words of his disciple in her beautiful hymn,

"Is not ancient story told,
But a glowing prophecy."

Primeval history is the record of the rise of man, not of his fall. The chasm of which humanity has been so painfully sensible and sought so strenuously to give account

86 The Influence of Emerson

is between the creative archetypal Idea and the first step of the evolutionary process whose last step shall be the actualization of the Idea in the Divine Commonwealth. The first Eden is of heaven, heavenly, the harrying divine thought implanted in the mind of man at the beginning, the haunting hint of his own definition; the last Eden is the Republic of God. Emerson saw the path, the motive, the original and end; and he saw them in a way which made his philosophy of religion harmonious with the science of his time, and made him the true friend and aider of all critical men who, in a critical age, would live in the spirit.

All evolution was subsumed by him under an adequate philosophy. Behind and through the process he saw the Idea,—which so many men of science in this time have not seen, and, not seeing, have wrought their mischief. Already as a boy, in one of his college essays,* he wrote what might well

* His Bowdoin essay on "The Present State of Ethical Philosophy," in 1821, for which he received a second prize. He received the first Bowdoin prize the previous year for an essay on "The Character of Socrates"; but this essay is inferior to the other. The two have been published together with an introduction by Rev. Edward Everett Hale.

have served Kropotkin as a motto for the title-page of his "Mutual Aid as a Factor in Evolution": "The opinion that nature tends to savageness is not true." The impulses to social intercourse he saw were aboriginal; and more selective and determining than fierceness was parental affection, dictating actions of "wise and profound calculation." The word of his youth was the word of his age. The law after which the Universe was made he pronounced to be that which the moral sentiment speaks to every man; and it was with the assertion of "parity, identity of design, through Nature," that he declared that we find "benefit to be the uniform aim: that there is a force always at work to make the best better and the worst good." This is Emerson's rationale of the dynamics and the teleology of evolution; and there is no other satisfying or sane philosophy.

Amidst many rash and mischievous "philosophies of evolution," it is wholesome to recur to these first principles,—profitable and very necessary to consider seriously what is first and what circumferential second. No man in this time has approached the prob-

lem of the world and the soul with mind so capacious and so veracious as our own great thinker; none has spoken a word so proportionate, so rational, and so commanding. The American, at least, has not excuse who, possessed of Emerson's inspired and sacred page, permits his insight to truckle to tradition, hangs up his logic on psychology, and chokes intellect and freedom in mechanism, lawlessness, and fate.

II

Emerson and Theodore Parker

EMERSON AND THEODORE PARKER

IN 1838 the daguerreotype was invented. I wish that the first sensitive plate, perfected and tenacious, could have been uncovered, not in Westminster Abbey, where on a midsummer day in that year 1838 Victoria was crowned queen,—the gewgaws consecrated by traditions of the Conqueror and Richard Lionheart and Harry Tudor and the real kings brushed up once more by the rather ghostly bishops who wore the robes of Stephen Langton and Joseph Butler, and a galvanized crown blessed once more by a galvanized Church,—not there, but in the little chapel of the Divinity School of Harvard University, where on another midsummer day of that same year a little crowd of men and women was gathered, and an earnest man was speaking simply some simple, earnest words. We should all like a picture of that scene, I think; for this man

was the real king, and this scene was more impressive than the other to him who sees deep. Ideas alone have royalty and divine right in this noon-time of the world; and so we count this little gathering at Harvard the most important thing of that year 1838.

The speaker was Ralph Waldo Emerson. The name did not mean much on the morning of that day. The small world to which it was known at all knew it as the name of a young man who had left the pulpit of the Unitarian Church half a dozen years before, because he could not conscientiously join in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; who had been to Europe since and hunted up Thomas Carlyle in the solitude of Craigenputtock, and had just now published in Boston Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus." He had written a little book of his own, too,— "Nature,"—and had given lectures in Boston and the towns about, which had drawn to him the attention of the thoughtful people. He had given an oration at Harvard the year before the Divinity School Address, on "The American Scholar," which had so shocked the scholars who heard and read it

into reality and consciousness of their own souls that Dr. Holmes pronounced it "our intellectual Declaration of Independence." He had retired now from the rush and roar of Boston to the quiet of a Concord farmhouse to spend his life.

"Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home,"

he had said again to the fawning flattery and upstart wealth of the town and the insincerities and old clothes of the Church.

"When I am stretched beneath the pines,
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools and the learned clan;
For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?"

He had been meeting with God in the bush, standing on the holy ground with the shoes off his feet; and he was come now to tell the college and the Church what the voice had said.

He spoke of the beauty of nature. He spoke of spiritual laws, of which all nature that we see is but the clothing and the

symbol. He spoke of the more overpowering beauty of the sentiment of virtue, which teaches us that we are "born to the perfect." "The laws of the soul execute themselves," he said. "He who does a good deed is instantly ennobled; he who does a mean deed is by the action itself contracted. If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God. If a man deceive, he deceives himself. Thus is man made the Providence to himself, dispensing good to his goodness and evil to his sin." This sentiment, he said, lies at the foundation of society. Its absence is the presence of degradation. Let this primary faith depart, and the very words it spake become false and hurtful. The doctrine of inspiration lost or the oracle made second-hand, and the church falls, and the state, art, letters, and life.

Such a time, said this new prophet, had come in the history of the American Church. Its prayers and dogmas were grown as fabulous as Dante's *Inferno*, wholly insulated from anything in the life and business of the people. Tradition, said

he, characterizes the preaching of this country : it comes out of the memory, and not out of the soul. It is assumed that the age of inspiration is past, and that the Bible is closed. But it is the office of a true teacher to show us that God is, not was ; that he speaketh, not spake. The true Christianity, a faith like Christ's in the infinitude of man, was lost. Jesus Christ, said Emerson, was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world. He said : "I am divine. Through me, God acts ; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me ; or, see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think." But the understanding caught this high chant from the poet's lips, and said in the next age, "This was Jehovah come down out of heaven." The idioms of his language usurped the place of his truth ; and churches are built, not on his principles, but on his tropes. The preachers do not see that they make Christ's gospel not glad, and degrade his life and dialogues by insulation and pecu-

liarity. Let them lie, as they befell, alive and warm and part of human life. To aim to convert a man by miracles is a profanation of the soul. That which shows God in me is what fortifies me. Dare to go alone. Dare to love God without mediator or veil. Thank God for all good men, but say, "I also am a man." Yourself a new-born bard of the Holy Ghost, cast conformity behind you, and acquaint men at first hand with God.

This Harvard address of Emerson's marked an epoch. It was the first clear, complete, and uncompromising utterance of rational religion in America. It showed all men at once what the new faith was, and what it meant to do. It fell into the camp of the stiff and proper Unitarianism of Boston and Cambridge like a thunderbolt. It was a touchstone. It compelled every man to define himself and speak out somehow or other; and it divided the Church. "There are now two parties among the Unitarians," wrote Parker. "One is for progress; the other says, 'Our strength is to stand still.' Dr. Channing is the real head of the first

party; the other has no head." Channing, who was less than almost anything else in the world a "Channing Unitarian," stood by Emerson,—said, indeed, that he could discover no essential difference between Emerson's address and the sermon he himself had preached at the dedication of the school. He found that he himself "could not draw a long breath in Boston." Soon after, indeed, he died. Had he lived ten years longer, with his great prestige and power and his ever steady movement forward, he would have saved the Unitarian Church in America half a century.

But in the general Unitarian camp, "one shouted," said Parker, "'The Philistines be upon us!' another, 'We are all dead men!' while the majority called out, 'Atheism!'" The dean of the Divinity School said, "That part of it which was not folly was downright atheism." Mr. Norton, the high priest of the Church in those days, opened his mouth and preached upon "The Latest Form of Infidelity." No miracles, he said, no religion: the miracles of Jesus are the only evidence of the truth of Chris-

98 The Influence of Emerson

tianity. Henry Ware told the young men that, if there appeared to them any contradiction between the reason of man and the letter of the Bible, they "must follow the written word." "Reason," said another, "must be put down, or she will soon ask terrible questions." Harvard College, in the person of one who taught a "sound" philosophy there, had already pronounced Emerson's thoughts "fantastic and unreal"; and Professor Felton soon found that they were "full of extravagance and overweening self-confidence, ancient errors disguised in misty rhetoric, and theories which would overturn society and resolve the world into chaos." Such being the voice of Harvard College and of the Unitarian Church, we can picture for ourselves the reception accorded the new prophet in other religious circles and by the world at large.

But amid all this uproar there was one young man, not thirty years old yet, who had sat quietly through the address in the Harvard Chapel and, going home, had written: "It was the most inspiring strain I ever listened to,—so beautiful, so just,

so true, and terribly sublime! My soul is roused, and this week I shall write the long-meditated sermons on the state of the Church and the duties of these times." This young man had graduated at the Divinity School two years before, studying under Ware and Norton there, and was now settled over a little parish in West Roxbury. He was born in Lexington. His grandfather was the captain of the minute-men who gathered on Lexington Green on that morning of the 19th of April, 1775, and led in the first battle with British tyranny in the Revolution. The young man's name was Theodore Parker.

Theodore Parker was already a suspected man, known among his fellows as a man of ideas; and during the next three years he did much thinking. In May, 1841, at an ordination in South Boston, he sounded his full keynote, in a sermon on "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity." He showed the evils of an appeal to any external, prescriptive authority in matters of religion. He showed that there is no reason why moral and religious truths should rest

for their support on the personal authority of their revealer any more than the truths of science on the authority of him who makes them known first or most clearly. "If it could be proved," he said, "that the Gospels were a fabrication and that Jesus of Nazareth never lived, Christianity would still stand firm and fear no evil. In an age of corruption, Jesus stood and looked up to God. There was nothing between him and the Father of all. And we never are Christians as he was the Christ until we worship as Jesus did, with no mediator, with nothing between us and the Father of all."

You remember the result of this. It seems almost incredible to-day, when Channing's Baltimore sermon of 1819, Emerson's Harvard address of 1838, and this very sermon of Parker's in 1841 are the three utterances popularly classed in the Unitarian circle as the conspicuous landmarks of Unitarian thought and progress. The Church dropped him. "So far as the ministers are concerned," he was compelled to say, "I am alone." But the blood of his Lexington grandfather was in him, and he

said : " I will go about and preach and lecture in the city and glen, by the roadside and fieldside, and wherever men and women may be found. I will go eastward and westward and northward and southward, and make the land ring; and if this New England theology, that cramps the intellect and palsies the soul of us, does not come to the ground, then it shall be because it has more truth in it than I have ever found. What I have seen to be false I will proclaim a lie on the house-top; and, fast as God reveals truth, I will declare his word." And then, while almost every pulpit and every newspaper in Boston was vilifying him, while some of his clerical friends would not speak to him in the street and refused to take him by the hand,—let us never forget the noble exceptions, let us remember Freeman Clarke and Bartol and Robbins and the rest,—in their public meetings left the sofas or benches where he sat down, and withdrew from him, we read, as Jews from contact with a leper, then a little company of gentlemen met together, passed one resolution, and went home. "*Resolved*, That Theodore

102 The Influence of Emerson

Parker shall have a hearing in Boston.” To my mind, that was one of the most remarkable church councils ever held. The Council of Trent did not accomplish so much as that in its whole six years.

I speak to you of Emerson and Parker to-day, while the flowers laid on the grave of Emerson are still fragrant, because I would invoke the influence of this eloquent and solemn hour to impress more deeply upon every soul of us the duties of openness to new ideas, of scorn of compromise, and of self-reliance.* I wish that in this hour we may bethink ourselves more gratefully what the darkness was into which these great souls let in the light by which we walk ; and I wish that, turning from our secularities and societies and strifes, we may, amid these sacramental memories, more seriously fix our minds upon the infinite God, the immortal life, and the eternal right, in the consciousness of which they reposed and made true religion to consist, and to consist alone.

*This address was first given soon after the death of Emerson, and this original occasional character, manifest in much of it, I have not sought to change, although certain references in the paper as now printed are of later date.

Were this a biographical study, much should be said of the personal and literary relations of the two great thinkers; but at these we may here give but the merest glance. Parker had met Emerson almost two years before the Harvard address,—perhaps even before that. While yet hardly out of the Divinity School, he had lectured in Concord, and had passed part of the evening with Emerson, going home to record his admiration in his journal. In the autumn of 1837 he is in the Connecticut Valley, delighting in “Nature,” which had appeared only the year before, and resenting Professor Bowen’s attack upon it. Taking the little West Roxbury parish, we find him quoting Emerson in his pulpit. As we find “Darwinism” in Emerson before Darwin, so we find it in Parker. Sixteen years before “The Origin of Species” we find him saying in a sermon: “In the visible world there is a law of continuity. All is done gradually, nothing by leaps. Invisibly the vegetable and animal world approach and intermingle. In animals lower down you see hints that a man is yet to be.” He contributed articles to the *Dial*,

which Emerson and Margaret Fuller edited. Writing of the *Dial* long afterwards, Emerson said, "It had some numbers highly important, because they contained papers by Theodore Parker, which," he adds in tribute to Parker's popular qualities, "sold the numbers." The *Dial* lived four years, dying in 1844. Three years later Parker joined himself with Emerson and J. Eliot Cabot to edit the *Massachusetts Quarterly Review*, which was also loved by the gods and died young,—younger even than the *Dial*; but it was made memorable by the Editor's Address, written by Emerson, and by Parker's papers upon Channing and upon Emerson himself. No so important general review of Emerson's writings had before appeared. It may fitly be compared in its office with Sterling's early review of Carlyle. Its appreciation of Emerson's intimacy with nature, and his strong use of the common things of our plain New England life, is clear and beautiful, and not less striking its recognition of the catholicity, sanity, and humor with which Emerson makes philosophy and poetry out of struggling thinkers of every

stripe,—“the conservative who thinks the nation is lost if his ticket chance to miscarry, the bigot worshipping the knot-hole through which a dusty beam of light has looked in upon his darkness, the radical who declares that nothing is good if established, and the patent reformer who screams in your ears that he can finish the world with a single touch.” Comparing Emerson with our other American writers, Parker declared that his fame and influence would outlast them all. Emerson’s editorial address had been full of the spirit which he himself so justly ascribes to Parker. There is the Parker spirit in his word upon the religious problem and condition of the time; the spirit in his word upon the political character of the time which later inspired alike Parker’s words and his own upon both Daniel Webster and John Brown; the Parker discontent with mere bigness in America unmatched by moral greatness. Only our geography and material activities were colossal: no commensurate genius was yet reported, “no speech heard but that of the auctioneers, newsboys, and the caucus.” “Where,” he exclaimed, “is the

106 The Influence of Emerson

great breath of the New World, the voice of aboriginal nations opening new eras with hymns of lofty cheer?" That breath was already finding utterance in his question and demand, in the words which he was speaking month by month to young men in college halls and to the American people from platforms east and west, in country and in town; it was finding utterance in the sermons and lectures of Parker; it had found utterance in the things of religion, for a generation, in the words and life of Channing, who had died five years before, and who was in so true and large a sense the spiritual father of both Emerson and Parker.

This peculiar obligation to Channing of both Emerson and Parker must not be passed unrecognized, even in the briefest survey of their religious work and influence. The three names must be grouped together. They make our great triumvirate in the realm of religious progress and reform. They had the same high idealistic philosophy; they stood for the same rational method; and they had alike that reverence for the soul and that lofty social ideal which

made them as earnest and constant workers in the field of politics and whatever concerned man's freedom and growth as in the field of religion. Emerson was born in the very year, 1803, that Channing was ordained and installed as minister of the Federal Street Church; and he grew up in a community, and especially in a family circle, pervaded by Channing's influence. In 1821, while he was a student at Harvard College, he heard Channing deliver the Dudleian Lecture there, and expressed his admiration of it as the fruit of "moral imagination" and "the highest species of reasoning upon divine subjects." He began his studies for the ministry under Channing's direction; and soon after the completion of his studies we find him preaching in Channing's pulpit. He pays tribute to Channing's genius and influence as among the more immediate early causes of the Transcendental movement. The American Unitarian Association, of which Channing was chosen president, was formed, by auspicious coincidence, on Emerson's birthday, May 25, 1825; and Emerson was one of its first missionary preachers.

Of Channing's address on "Spiritual Freedom," given soon after the formation of the Association, Mr. Chadwick justly says, "We do not wonder at Emerson's delight in Channing when we read this superb anticipation of his own 'Self-reliance.'" Mr. Chadwick marshals various passages of the kind that "made Emerson bless Channing as one of those who had said his good things before him." Channing was almost as impatient as Emerson himself with the growth of what he called a "Unitarian orthodoxy." His deafness kept him from Emerson's early Boston lectures; but his daughter heard them with joy, and borrowed the manuscripts to read to her father, in whom they also found hearty response. When others condemned Emerson for his Harvard address, Channing defended him; and he grew steadily younger, more hospitable, and more prophetic, as he grew older. "In our wantonness," said Emerson, "we often flout Dr. Channing, and say he is getting old. But as soon as he is ill, we remember he is our bishop, and that we have not done with him yet"; and on the centennial of Chan-

ning's birth, April 7, 1880, two years before his own death, he went from Concord to Newport, to be present at the laying of the corner-stone of the new Channing Memorial Church.

Parker was no sooner settled in his West Roxbury parish than we find him going to Channing often for help in solving his pressing religious problems. He borrows books of him, and discusses with him Strauss's *Life of Jesus*. Channing was now sometimes preaching sermons which Dr. Gannett thought "suited to do more harm than good"; and Parker writes, "If Dr. Channing were a young man of five-and-twenty, all unknown to fame, holding the same religious, philosophical, political, and social opinions as now, and preaching on them as he does, he could not find a place for the sole of his foot in Boston, though half a dozen pulpits were vacant." Years before the controversy over Emerson's Harvard address and Parker's sermon, Channing said: "The truth is, and it ought not to be disguised, that our ultimate reliance is and must be upon reason. If a professed revelation

110 The Influence of Emerson

seems to us plainly to disagree with itself or clash with great principles which we cannot question, we ought not to hesitate in withholding from it our belief. I am surer that my rational nature is from God than that any book is the expression of his will." Parker went often to a little club to which Channing went, at the home of his friend and parishioner, Jonathan Phillips; and writing of one of these "Socratic meetings," where Channing was the Socrates, and the theme was Progress, Parker says, "Had the conversation been written out by Plato, it would equal any of his beautiful Dialogues." A week later the subject for the club's discussion was a recent lecture of Emerson's. Channing was no more troubled by Parker's South Boston sermon than by Emerson's Harvard address; and when, the next year, Channing died, Parker wrote to a friend: "No man in America has done so much to promote truth, virtue, and religion as he. I feel that I have lost one of the most valuable friends I ever had. His mind was wide, and his heart was wider yet." In his journal he wrote, "No man since Washington

has done so much to elevate his country." Parker's memorial sermon at the time, and his more exhaustive paper in the *Massachusetts Review* a few years later, are among the noblest tributes ever paid to Channing's character and work.

I link the names of Emerson and Parker here, because in the things of religion they cannot be separated.* They stand for the same thing. Emerson was Parker writing books. Parker was Emerson's truth in the pulpit. "What Emerson uttered without plot or plan," William Gannett says well, "Theodore Parker elaborated to a system. Parker was the Paul of Transcendentalism." When there was almost no warm hand for

* James Freeman Clarke, reviewing Parker's "Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion," which he called "the new gospel of shallow naturalism," spoke of Parker as "the expounder of Negative Transcendentalism, as Mr. R. W. Emerson is the expounder of Positive Transcendentalism." Forty years later Mr. Clarke edited an edition of Parker's sermons for the Unitarian Association. The Unitarians were holding their annual festival on the evening of the day in May, 1860, when the news of Parker's death reached Boston; and then and there, from the depths of his heart, Mr. Clarke, who twenty-two years later was to conduct Emerson's funeral at Concord, paid a noble tribute to his friend. In his tribute to Emerson prepared for the Massachusetts Historical Society he drew a parallelism between Emerson and Parker, which it is interesting to compare with his early word.

Parker in Boston, it was his wont to visit Emerson often at Concord; and he always returned to his work quickened and inspired. At one of Emerson's lectures in Boston, when the storm against Parker was fiercest, a lecture at which a score of the religious and literary leaders of the city were present, Emerson, as he laid his manuscript upon the desk and looked over the audience after his wont, observed Parker; and immediatly he stepped from the platform to the seat near the front where Parker sat, grasping his hand and standing for a moment's conversation with him. It was not ostentation, and it was not patronage: it was admiring friendship,—and that fortification and stimulus Parker in those times never failed to feel. It was Emerson who fed his lamp, he said; and Emerson said that, be the lamp fed as it might, it was Parker whom the time to come would have to thank for finding the lamp burning. Their differences in temperament and method were obvious enough. Parker wielded the mallet of Thor. Emerson, as Dr. Holmes so finely said, was "an iconoclast without a hammer, who took

down our idols from their pedestals so tenderly that it seemed like an act of worship." Father Taylor would not have been so sure of Parker's easy pathway into heaven as he was sure of Emerson's. But their aim was the same. "Parker," said Emerson, "is the soldier whom God gave strength and will to fight for him the battle of the day." "Emerson," said Parker, "has a more glorious history than any American of this generation. He has touched the deepest strings on the human harp, and, ten centuries after he is immortal, will wake music which he first waked." He dedicated to Emerson his "Ten Sermons of Religion"; and when, at last, all broken in the fight, he sailed away in search of the health which he should never find, his greatest comfort was in saying, as he sat on the deck on Sunday morning, "Emerson is preaching at Music Hall to-day." When he died there at Florence, no churchman's voice was heard at the funeral in Music Hall, but the words of Emerson and Phillips.

"He has gone down in early glory to his grave," said Emerson, "to be a living and

114 The Influence of Emerson

enlarging power wherever learning, wit, honest valor, and independence are honored." "The vice charged against America," he continued, "is the want of sincerity in leading men. It does not lie at Parker's door. He never kept back the truth for fear to make an enemy. It was his merit, like Luther, Knox, Latimer, and John Baptist, to speak tart truth when that was peremptory and when there were few to say it. As a reformer, he insisted beyond all men in pulpits that the essence of Christianity is its practical morals: it is there for use, or it is nothing; and if you combine it with sharp trading or private intemperance or successful fraud or immoral politics or unjust wars or the cheating of Indians, it is an hypocrisy and the truth is not in you, . . . and no love of religious music or praise of John Wesley or of Jeremy Taylor can save you from the Satan which you are. Ah, my brave brother!" cried Emerson in closing, "it seems as if, in a frivolous age, our loss were immense, and your place cannot be supplied. But you will already be consoled in the transfer of your genius, know-

ing well that the nature of the world will affirm to all men, in all times, that which for twenty-five years you valiantly spoke; that the winds of Italy murmur the same truth over your grave, the winds of America over these bereaved streets; that the sea which bore your mourners home affirms it, the stars in their courses, and the inspirations of youth; whilst the polished and pleasant traitors to human rights, with perverted learning and disgraced graces, rot and are forgotten with their double tongue."

Years afterwards, as Emerson wrote his historic notes of New England life and thought in the time of the Transcendental movement, published after his death, he paid this further tribute, not a few phrases of which almost parallel the lines in Lowell's famous portrait: "Theodore Parker was our Savonarola, an excellent scholar, in frank and affectionate communication with the best minds of his day, yet the tribune of the people, and the stout Reformer to urge and defend every cause of humanity with and for the humblest of mankind. He was no artist. Highly refined persons might easily

miss in him the element of beauty. What he said was mere fact, almost offended you, so bald and detached; little cared he. He stood altogether for practical truth; and so to the last. He used every day and hour of his short life, and his character appeared in the last moments with the same firm control as in the mid-day of strength. I habitually apply to him the words of a French philosopher who speaks of 'the man of Nature who abominates the steam-engine and the factory. His vast lungs breathe independence with the air of the mountains and the woods.'"

After Parker's death his society desired Emerson, the next autumn, to give the first sermon for them in Music Hall. The treatment Parker had received had alienated Emerson more than ever from the Unitarians, and he had long before abandoned all thought of ever preaching again. But he said that he could stand where Parker had stood; and he not only preached on that first Sunday, but spoke in Parker's pulpit many times for several years. He was the only man large enough for that place, the

one man who stood roundly for the truth which Parker preached. These two Americans seem to me the two greatest religious teachers and reformers of our century,—incomparably beyond Döllinger and Hyacinthe and that class of reformers, whose work was really all done three hundred years ago; wiser far than Beecher and Bushnell and Maurice and Stanley and the sundry sorts of Broad Churchmen, whose new wine already spills from the old bottles which it was foolish to use; greater than Carlyle, by so much as their faith in essential humanity was greater than his. The test of leadership and influence is the degree to which the thinker seizes and embodies that which is to determine and abide. Here is our New Puritanism. The Erasmusisms of our time, amiable and emancipated, have not the Puritan credentials. Emerson and Parker,—these are they in whom John Calvin and John Milton, George Fox and William Penn would in the nineteenth century have found true and real kinship.

The first service which I wish this subject might perform for us is to impress anew the

118 The Influence of Emerson

duty of openness to new ideas. Feeble, indeed, here are any words of mine beside the emphasis of history itself and new events. I have thought that it must be impossible for any man who has lived in these last years and learned two of their great lessons ever again to be a bigot. A much briefer time than even my own life covers has seen the outcome of the careers of William Lloyd Garrison and Charles Darwin. I can remember a time when Garrison's life was hardly yet safe on Boston Common. Some here, not old men yet, can remember when great rewards were offered for his arrest, when he lay in jail in Baltimore, when he was dragged by a rope, half-naked, through the streets of Boston. We can remember, too, how, just as John Brown's musketry was rattling at Harper's Ferry, a book was laid on the library table, called "The Origin of Species"; and we can remember the noise that followed, much louder than John Brown's musketry, for almost twenty years. "Darwinism" was the butt of every *Punch's* jokes, the target of all satire, the object of the venom and vituperation of

the pulpit and the religious newspaper. I suppose that half the sermons that many of us have heard in all our sermon-hearing Sundays have been on "Christianity and Darwinism," or some variation of the theme; and in most mouths the phrase long meant about the same as God and the devil. If a preacher confessed Darwinism, he was a doomed man. If a professor confessed Darwinism, his theological-school days, sometimes his college days, were done. If the divinity student were caught hospitably housing "The Origin of Species," it were better for him, so far as pulpit aspirations went, that he had never been born.

Well, we saw Garrison borne to the tomb amidst the reverence and tears of a nation which, if it should build a monument tomorrow to commemorate its new life and salvation, would place his figure at the front, as the central bearer of the redemptive idea. And just as New England was bearing Emerson to his grave, Old England, while the bells tolled and the white-robed boys sang anthems, laid Darwin to rest in Westminster Abbey, beside Newton and Johnson and

Chatham and Chaucer and those whom she delighteth to honor. The mockers and satirists of a few years ago are the elegists and eulogists of to-day. There are few men of science who have not now placed Darwin's truth alongside the fundamental theories of Newton and Copernicus; and no pulpit has yet been heard from which, if not manly enough to join in the panegyric, has been base enough to echo its old follies or is not busy in the work of reconstruction and new accommodation. I cannot think that these two lessons will easily be forgotten by this generation. I cannot think that those of us who study politics and science, or venture to speak of them at all, will ever, after witnessing this abuse and then this apotheosis of Garrison and Darwin, be hurried to condemn any thoughtful and earnest man unheard; and I think that the Church will be cautious before it again compromises itself with serious men, swells the bad reputation of caring more for its creeds than for the truth, and damages the cause of religion itself, as it has done in the Darwin controversy.

As the crown of thorns and then the

laurel wreath to Garrison and Darwin in the realms of politics and science, so in the realm of morals and religion the rejection of Emerson and Parker forty years ago and the glory which is theirs to-day. I suppose there has been no so conspicuous case of persecution in the American religious world in the century as that of Theodore Parker, and no man ever who was the object of bitterer malice, misrepresentation, and execration in his lifetime than he. He was a man who had no delight in controversy. He was not by choice or first nature a fighter, though certainly a better fighter never lived. He was a scholar, with all the scholar's love of quiet and retirement and the library. He was a man whose whole warm, affectionate nature craved love and sympathy and the good opinion of his fellows. Yet he was forced, by the rank abuses of the times and by the infidelities of men, into lifelong conflict; though in that conflict he never once shot back a poisoned arrow, seldom opened a personal controversy, but fought and conquered simply by preaching straight on, regardless of criticism or abuse on the right

hand or the left, the great positive principles of an irresistible gospel.

The treatment which Parker received from those who advertised themselves as "liberal" and from those who did not was much the same. The Unitarians of fifty years ago, as Parker's biographer has said, were "about as complacent a set of Christians as ever took ship for the kingdom." It was not the heroic age of Unitarianism. Aside from Dr. Channing and a dozen others who might be named, the clergy seem to have been, if their sayings and doings in the Emerson and Parker controversies give their measure, a petrified and asphyxiated set of men, as destitute of red blood as the pre-Raphaelite saints. If they had any positive maxim, it was, to use a phrase of Emerson's elsewhere applied, "By taste are ye saved," — by propriety; but for the most part, as Emerson himself put it, their creed was only a "pale negation." Their conspicuous theological occupation was to deny the divinity of Christ,—a melancholy business; and they had not yet learned that Christ was human. Parker's persua-

sion was that no body of men was ever more completely sold to the sense of expediency. They were, indeed, "the advance guard of the Church militant in America." They had been "the movement party in theology," and had done a praiseworthy work. They had repudiated creed subscription, and declared the right of each man to investigate for himself in matters of religion. But a reaction was now springing up. A Unitarian orthodoxy had been tacitly agreed upon, and the main endeavor of the elders seemed to be to prevent any sort of commotion and to keep things decent and in order.

When a man like Theodore Parker came into such a circle as that, an honest man and a rugged, a man who could not compromise, but who must and would speak out the truth that was in him, a man whose every word was "fierily furnaced in the blast of a life that had struggled in earnest," — when such a man, I say, came into such a circle, there could be but one result. The controlling men of the denomination said, This young man must be silenced! They

closed their pulpits and their periodicals to him, they tried to alienate his little congregation, they wrote abusive letters, they refused to occupy the same platform, to trade at the same shop, to remain in the same room with him. They excommunicated him, put him out of the Church. Many of the brethren had said to him before: "You are right, you say the truth; but it won't do. Don't preach it. He that spits in the wind spits in his own face. You will ruin yourself, and do nobody any good!" And, when the trial came, man after man on whom Parker had reckoned for countenance fell back upon the old guard and was silent. "Alas," he wrote, "for that man who consents to think one thing in his closet and preach another in his pulpit! God shall judge him in his mercy. But over his study and over his pulpit must be written, *Emptiness*; on his forehead and right hand, *Deceit, deceit!*"

If these things were done in the green tree, what was to be expected in the dry? Parker was the special object of the prayers and maledictions of the American churches

for twenty years. Priestly malice, as Phillips said, scanned every inch of his garment; but "it was seamless, it could find no stain." He saw men stare at him in the street, and point and say, "That is Theodore Parker!" and look at him as if he were a murderer. Prayer-meetings were held on his particular account. During the great revival of 1858 it was recommended that men and women, wherever they might be, in the shop or on the street, should pray for Parker daily when the clock struck one. "We know that we cannot argue him down," they said; "but, O Lord, put a hook in his jaws, so that he may not be able to speak! If he will still persist in speaking, induce the people to leave him, and come up and fill this house instead of that!" "Hell never vomited forth a more wicked and blasphemous monster than Theodore Parker," said one of the noted evangelists, "and it is only the mercies of Jesus Christ which have kept him from eternal damnation already"; and then he prayed: "If this man is a subject of grace, O Lord, convert him and bring him into the kingdom of thy Son; but, if

he is beyond the reach of the saving influence of the gospel, remove him out of the way, and let his influence die with him !”

And Parker himself through all this? It did not surprise him, for he knew human nature. He knew that in no country and in no age would he have encountered so little persecution as he did encounter. He knew that this bitterness and falsehood were but the natural fruits of the hard and dark theology against which he rose to do battle. “I knew all this would come,” he said. “It has come from my religion; and I would not forego that religion for all this world can give. I have borne sorrows that bow men together till they can in no wise lift up themselves. But my comfort has been the joy of religion, my delight is the infinite God; and that has sustained me.” “If I fall and die,” he said, as he sailed away, “let mine enemies rejoice as much as they will at the thought that there is one feeble voice the less rebuking the vice of the Press, the State, the Market, and the Church; one voice the less to speak a word for truth, freedom, justice, and natural religion. Let

them triumph in this; but let them expect no greater result to follow from my death. For to the success of the great truths I have taught, it is now but of the smallest consequence whether I preach in Boston and the lyceums of the North or my body crumbles in some quiet, nameless grave. They are not *my* truths. A great Truth of Humanity once set a-going, it is in the charge of humanity. Neither State nor Press nor Market nor Church can ever put it down. It will drown the water men pour on it, and quench their hostile fire. Cannot the Bible teach its worshippers that a grave is no dungeon to shut up Truth in? It is one thing to rejoice at the sickness and death of a short-lived heretic; but it is another and a different to alter the constitution of the universe and put down a fact of spontaneous human consciousness, which also is a Truth of God."

When he lay dying there in Florence, he said earnestly, in one of the gleams of light that came at intervals across the weakness: "There are two Theodore Parkers now,—one is dying here in Italy, the other I have

planted in America. He will live there, and finish my work." And, as the sun looked down upon the half-dozen mourners and the friend who read the Beatitudes over his grave on the banks of the Arno, the same sun lighted up the arches of Music Hall as his dearer friend, unconscious of that scene in Italy, stepped into his own desk, and opened one of his own sermons to the text, "Have faith in God."

It was a Sunday in May, 1860, the year so heavy with forebodings of that final tragical struggle with slavery, so much more desperate than the heroic struggle he had himself kept up so long. On a midsummer day of the next year, Mrs. Browning was laid to rest near him; and, in the autumn afterward, Arthur Hugh Clough. Three years more, and Landor was borne to the same little Protestant graveyard in the Florence where Emerson had sought him out, on his first European journey, thirty years before. In the five years the four whose memories have made that peaceful God's-acre forever sacred were there committed to Italian earth together, among the

Italian cypresses, beneath the soft Italian skies. How many Emerson memories concentrate there ! Clough, still at Oxford, had become one of Emerson's dearest friends during his English days in 1848 ; and when, four years later, he came to spend a year in our own Cambridge, it was at Emerson's urging, and to find in Emerson the American whom he most admired and loved. It was in Emerson's society that Parker came to know him ; and I think that no words testify with exacter faithfulness the inflexible faith of Parker through his long life-battle than those lines of Clough : —

“ It fortifies my soul to know
 That, though I perish, Truth is so :
 That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
 Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
 I steadier step when I recall
 That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.”

It is sacramental for the American to stand alone by Parker's grave in the little Florence graveyard, and send his thoughts across the sea as Parker sent his thoughts in that last earthly hour. If it be gray No-

vember, with the cold Alps just left behind; if, freighted with some cumulation of dark facts or sad misgivings, you be heavy-hearted and of little faith; if even Giotto's tower and San Giovanni's gates have failed in their power to charm,—that stern gray stone by the gray grave, if you let it speak its faithful speech in the still hour, will make the weak heart start again and tell you strongly to have faith in God and in God's triumph in his world; and, as you turn back into the city, the streets, before perhaps so cold and unresponsive, shall be all eloquent with history and beauty; each boy upon the sidewalk shall be a Dante or Michel Angelo in making; and the dear home country for which you kept such sad vigil shall seem haloed by the sunset as a sure potential republic of God, all populous with Parkers and Emersons.

So it is sacramental at this hour, when we have pictured the generation gone, with all the bigotry and blindness and "propriety" that make us sick, to pause and remember that Emerson and Parker have become accredited saints in the calendar, the Harvard

address and the South Boston sermon Unitarian tracts; to remember how upon the table of every thoughtful minister of religion in the land, be he called "liberal" or "orthodox," the Prayers of Parker lie, to stimulate and voice devotion; and feel, through door and window, the air pulsating still with the universal benediction falling on the grave of Emerson. And, remembering and feeling this, let us say to ourselves persuasively, when hearts seem cold and the fight is long and the false seems strong and the day is weary, Have faith in God and the power of his might, and know, indeed, that one with him is a majority.

"Oh, blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field, when he
Is most invisible.

"And blest is he who can divine
Where real right doth lie,
And dares to take the side that seems
Wrong to man's blindfold eye."

I know of nothing that can impress more deeply the duties of openness to new ideas,

132 The Influence of Emerson

of scorn of compromise, and of self-reliance than the story of these two lives. I know of nothing grander than Parker's pulpit, as it stood there for twenty years, amid the shuffling and truckling of those times, thundering of righteousness and judgment to come. I should like to have been of those earnest thousands who, Sunday after Sunday, went up to Music Hall to hear him preach. No trumped-up, twenty-minute speeches those, confectional and condimental, such as some of our weak-backed congregations sit through with difficulty even, but solid sermons of an hour, or two hours if need were, that sent the people home with their ears tingling for a week. No place that for a lazy head. Men told him that he was preaching over the heads of the people; but none ever had to tell him that he was doing that much commoner thing, preaching under their feet. Not a school for the exquisite graces of etiquette: Parker was not a rival of the dancing-master. Boston had exhibitions plenteous of *suaviter in modo*; his business was with *fortiter in re*. "You never made me your minister," he said, "to

flatter or to please, but to instruct and serve." Those who wore soft raiment, in those days, dwelt in kings' houses ; he wore camel's hair and a leathern girdle, and the words fell from his lips sharp and rugged as from the Baptist's,— " Repent ! Wrath to come ! " He preached against the errors of the popular theology more than upon any other form of wrong, for he felt that they were most fatally mischievous of all. But, like all those New England Transcendentalists, he had much to say upon all the burning questions of social reform. The Church was here in the world for nothing at all, if not to hold up a higher standard of life and create a better society. Intemperance, covetousness, ignorance, the wrongs of woman, war, political corruption, above all, slavery,— like grape-shot were the sermons rained upon them all. As it was Garrison who fought slavery with the newspaper, and Phillips on the bema, and Whittier with the poem, and Sumner in the Senate, and John Brown on the scaffold, and Lincoln with the sword of State, so it was Parker who fought it with the gospel in the pulpit, while the church-

men of good and regular standing, whose heads had felt the bishop's fingers, shivered before the bullying of the slaveholders, chattered about Onesimus, and whined, "Cursed be Canaan!"

But the most precious of the great preacher's sermons were not those which attacked society nor those which attacked the Church, but those in which he lifted his hearers up into the comfort of the mighty faith and trust wherewith he himself was comforted of God, and sent them forth to the duties of life with the divine pledge of victory and fruition. "The first time I heard Theodore Parker preach," writes Louisa Alcott,—who has passed the torch along in books so full of gospel to so many "little women," and to men as well,— "was a memorable day to me, as such occasions doubtless were to many others who 'came to wonder, and remained to pray.' The sermon was addressed to 'laborious young women,' and was full of paternal advice, encouragement, and sympathy; but the prayer that followed went straight to the hearts of those for whom he prayed, not only com-

forting by its tenderness and strengthening by its brave and cheerful spirit, but showing them where to go for greater help, and how to ask it as simply and confidently as he did. It was a quiet talk with God, as if long intercourse and much love had made it natural and easy for the son to seek the Father, confessing faults, asking help, and submitting all things to the All Wise and Tender as freely as children bring their little sorrows, hopes, and fears to their mother's knee. To one laborious young woman, just setting forth to seek her fortune, that Sunday was the beginning of a new life, that sermon like the scroll given to Christian, that prayer the God-speed of one who was to her, as to so many, a valiant Great-heart leading pilgrims through Vanity Fair to the Celestial City."

It is this deep, positive religion in Emerson and Parker, this great faith in God and right and the soul, of which I would speak with chief emphasis, rather than of any work of theirs against old superstitions and in the service of free thought. I think there are not many present here who need more words on old superstitions and free thought, save

136 The Influence of Emerson

to brace them to the work of keeping the light shining in the dark places. I suppose that most of us are already "rationalized" almost to death; and the everlasting onslaught on the creeds, necessary as it is no doubt, is wearisome to some of us, like the crackling of thorns under the pot. We have quite as much light already as we can manage well, and what we pray for now is more sweetness and very much more disposition to do something. Not that I would minimize the great offices of Emerson and Parker in the work of theological enlightenment, nor our own duties in the same direction. How great those offices were is best attested by the public sentiment which they created, able to recognize and love the truth they taught, and condemning, in every enlightened place, the treatment which the public sentiment of the middle of the century indorsed. It is attested by the greater liberality in every church in the land that stands on the line of railroad. It is attested by the decay everywhere of the belief in the old doctrines of infallible books, mechanical creation, and eternal damnation. It is attested

by the inaugurals of theological professors, declaring that miracle cannot longer be appealed to as the test of truth, and by the clear perception of every thoughtful student in the schools that that is not the worthy conception of God's universe which finds best evidence of the divine in prophets riding in chariots of fire or in great fishes, in the stopping of the sun and moon to light up slaughter, or in wonders wrought with water and wine or loaves and fishes, but that which knows that the highest freedom works by perfect law, and sees "in the procession of the stars, in every dewdrop and in every flower, and most in every human soul, the working of the present God." Our duties in the matter appear wherever these old doctrines still have power, and men still endeavor to put covers on God's Bible, to limit God's activity to certain sections of the map, and to consign any soul of man to hopeless hell. Wherever men are found engaged in the bad business, however conscientious, of defending bad doctrines by the bad method of appeal to external and prescriptive authority, there we must still lift up the battle-flag of

138 The Influence of Emerson

Emerson and Parker, and cry, Turn on the lights!

It is not so much from superstition and overbelief, however, that the interests of religion are endangered to-day as from underbelief and a withering of spiritual life in the atmosphere of a mechanical philosophy and ethics. The death-blow has been given to superstition. There are always men, of course, who never know that the sun has risen until it is noon; and superstition will yet stagger on for a miserable distance before its final fall. But Lessing and Kant struck its death-blows a hundred years ago; it is already ghastly from loss of blood; and there is no loveliness in it more, that men should desire it. But in the breaking up of the old religious sanctions and the extension of the realm of law to regions where, before, men saw nothing but arbitrariness and impulse, God has seemed to many to be pushed so far away that he has been discounted altogether, and a mechanism running rapidly to a dread fatalism has seemed to leave no place for the idea of freedom and to grind up the soul. I have paid tribute to Darwin

and his epoch-making service; but we must not blind ourselves to the fact that his science was caught up and fathered by a poor, unspiritual philosophy, whose identification with it in the minds of a million untrained and uninformed religious men has abundantly justified their jealousy and opposition. No good science is so good as bad philosophy is bad; and it may seriously be questioned whether the major influence of the doctrine of evolution up to date upon religious life and thought has not been prejudicial. It will be a generation yet before it takes its place in the world's mind where it took its place in the mind of Emerson long before Darwin wrote, and becomes blessing and inspiration unalloyed.

Tired of the false, distorted Jesus-worship of the churches, many manly men have come to listen more gladly to the words of almost any other of God's sons than to the words of Jesus, and to be found with almost any other name upon their lips rather than his, lest the merest honor to the name should confound them with the gross idolatry. "Let me never hear that man's name

again!" said the weary old Voltaire to the priests, when they talked to him of Jesus after their manner; and no man of rugged, stern sincerity but who, turning from much of the mawkish language of the prayer-meeting and the tract, at least can understand the feeling of the old iconoclast. So the loquacious and fulsome discipleship of a thin unintelligence makes us tire some days of the names of Bach and Wagner and Turner and Browning, of Washington even, of Carlyle and of Emerson himself. Tired of the superstitions, too, which have centred round the Bible, many have put their Bible on the upper shelf and thought they got more inspiration from Confucius and the Brahmins, from the new poem or new novel, or from the newspaper, than from the psalms of David or Isaiah's prophecies, the gospel of Christ, or the letters of Paul. Tired of the sluggish, unproductive dreaming of "a happy land far, far away," they have said: Enough of this! Here is work to be done, here are wrongs to be righted, here are men with no chance, here is the devil's work done in God's name. Don't

sing to us of heaven: we have only time and strength to work for a new earth. And so the doctrine of the soul has suffered; and to deny immortality is thought to be a virtue, to some has seemed heroic. It is more unselfish, they say, to work nobly, knowing there is no hereafter to reward us and that we shall not see the fruition.

Great is the nobleness in much of this,—in no wise to be confounded ever with the shallow and ignoble irreligion whose symptoms and whose speech are oft-times so similar. Greatly nobler, said Parker, is “the doubt of the man than the creed of the fool.” Greatly nobler often the atheist’s Law than the churchman’s God. Sublime witness is the protest, too, to the fact that the soul will not be chained. Men hate a dictum and a *must*. Legislate that your people shall admire the sunset, and the evening shall find them flocking from the hilltops to the gulches; that all shall learn “The Pilgrim’s Progress” and find no fault in it, and next year each literary circle shall be a “Hudibras” society. We tire of the best, will not be content with the best save with the better

and the good,—not on terms of insulation. Only the All is sacred and infallible. We leave the philosopher to-day for the ploughman; and to-morrow our foeman shall be more welcome than our friend. Dante and Shakespeare have had times of going out of fashion; and Beethoven and Michael Angelo are forgotten for Brahms and Botticelli or the new Frenchman. Yet, all the while, the sunset is beautiful, and Bunyan is better than Butler, and best is best. It were better that we should read Shakespeare always than that we should think Shelley and Schiller just as good; and the *dilettanti* who live only to glorify the pre-Raphaelites are not the men who do the most either for art or manhood. They do, indeed, do more for both than the devotees of a sentimental Guido or a dainty Carlo Dolci, just as the compilers of the “sacred anthologies” stand for a sturdier religion than the men who write the tracts. No men so full of the “sympathy of religions” as Emerson and Parker. Of Parker, Lowell said truly enough, if not indeed quite so truly as wittily,—

“His hearers can’t tell you on Sunday beforehand
If in that day’s discourse you’ll be Bibled or
Koraned” ;

and what other American brought true spiritual apprehension to the truth of India and Persia so early as Emerson? But all this Orientalism and comparative theology, which is the fashion now, invaluable and imperative as its office is and warmly as we welcome it to its right place, does us poor service, I think they would say, if it makes us fancy the Koran and the Vedas as great as the Bible, or Confucius and Zoroaster as great as Christ.

The transcendent merit of Emerson and Parker as religious teachers is that they never opposed halfness by halfness, and were never hurried by impatience of superstition to irreverence toward the object of the superstition. Jesus Christ, the Bible,—more than any others have Emerson and Parker helped us to see their transcendent pre-eminence among books and men, because recognizing this pre-eminence on the ground of freedom and pure reason. “People imagine,” said Emerson, “that the

144 The Influence of Emerson

place which the Bible holds in the world it owes to miracle. It owes it simply to the fact that it came out of a profounder depth of thought than any other book." "Jesus Christ," he said again, "alone in all history estimated the greatness of man: this one man was true to what is in you and me." And Parker sang:—

"Thy truth is still the light
Which guides the nations groping on their way,
Stumbling and falling in disastrous night,
Yet hoping ever for the perfect day.
Yes, thou art still the life; thou art the way
The holiest know."

This clear and cultured maintenance at the centre—for it is a question of culture, of real and round education—of what is true and best comes into the flimsy anti-Christianism of a cheap free-thinking like the healthy restoration of Shakespeare after the things that satisfied the shallow taste of Queen Anne's London. The temple which we build of the prophets and apostles who through past ages have mediated truth to men will lack beauty, proportion, and solid-

ity unless Jesus Christ be the chief cornerstone. And there was never a time when it was so important to say this strongly, despite the "Christo-centric" folk who mechanize and, by magnifying it into unnaturalness and dogma, degrade the truth, as the present time, when the superstitions which have made a rational grasp of Christ's idea so difficult are fading; when society seems ripe for a more practical appropriation of the principles—which it has never yet applied or tried—of neighborhood, equality and brotherhood, and the unit value of the soul, which he instinctively divined; and when a people parched and paralyzed by mechanism, utility, and fate thirsteth for freedom and the living God. What our society needs to-day is a baptism of the Holy Ghost. "I see in the young men of this age," said Emerson, "character, but scepticism." "They have insight and truthfulness, they will not mask their convictions, they hate cant; but more than this I do not readily find. The gracious motions of the soul—piety, adoration—I do not find. Scorn of hypocrisy,

146 The Influence of Emerson

elegance, boundless ambition of the intellect, willingness to make sacrifices for integrity of character, but not that religious submission and abandonment which give man a new element and being, and make him sublime."

This is what we want. The other, without this, is not enough. Goodness itself, without this, lacks its final grace and beauty. The soul, without this, is in the end distorted, maimed, and dumb. "Unlovely," said Emerson, in his last public religious utterance, speaking, as in 1838, to the Harvard students of religion, "unlovely, nay, frightful, is the solitude of the soul which is without God in the world." It is so. The man who has looked into the pit—and how many such there have been, Cloughs, Hallams, Sterlings, Robertsons, of every degree, in the sad period now passing, I believe, into a period more positive and glad!—knows that it is so. The man who has seen the sunshine without power to cheer, and who has learned to look into the starry heavens with irreverent incuriousness, who hears no music in the rolling sea, and sees no vision where

it fades into the sky, to whom the brook in the forest sings not, and who finds naught but flint and granite in the everlasting hills, to whom summer is only a waiting for winter, the earth a graveyard, men and their cities spectral, and his friend and the love that loves him incredible and unauthentic like himself,—he knows that it is frightful to know no Being behind the seeming, no living Will that shall endure, no Soul of beauty, no everlasting answering Thought,—frightful to be without God in the world. If my word come to any single soul who, like Paul with beasts, has fought with death, and to whose innermost experience it speaks, I say to you that, were there indeed no Soul in nature and no hereafter, nobility and goodness would still be good and noble. It would be better to love than to hate, to help than to sleep, to be brave and true than to be false and cowards. The man who tells you that, if this life be all, it matters not what you do, preaches swine's gospel and the devil's; he smells of brimstone and is libertine at heart. When the virtue of eternity is in a man,—the fact of our eternity is in no wise dependent on

our speculation,—he will live according to the forms of eternity, though his prospect be but a day. If this life be all, then make it count; and a seventy years' lease of this universe, with all its opportunities and joys and disciplines, is much. Life may still be great and noble, I say; and, whatever our philosophy, we are bound, in reverence of the inward mystery and the horizon's supplication, to make it so. If the proclamation of a godless universe and the soul's death be a glad new evangel that shall bring new liberty and power, as Emerson's and Parker's gospel brought liberty and power in ridding us of other chains, then indeed let us give heed, lest haply we be found fighting against godlessness! If this gospel speaks to you most persuasively in the hour of your highest aspiration and most self-sacrificing endeavor, listen to it. Whenever it comes preached by the thinker and the lover, listen to it.

“But if, when faith has fallen asleep,
You hear a voice, ‘Believe no more,’
And hear an ever-breaking shore
That tumbles in a godless deep,”

and the sound is not music to you, but a dread sound, yet if, in your continuous round of business and society and cellular thinking, you have dulled yourself into complacent listening, stop, and ask yourself what your life means and whither it is tending.

Say to the man who tells you that faith in God is a hindrance to earth's regeneration and to devotion to mankind that, when the atheistic teacher comes who shall prompt to nobler endeavor than Emerson and Parker, the atheistic martyr who shall suffer for the suffering more gladly than John Brown, the atheistic pioneer of civilization more dauntless than the Puritans of Plymouth, the atheistic apostle of any truth more zealous and more bold than Paul, the atheistic Christ who shall inspire self-sacrifice more heroic and discipleship nobler and purer than Jesus,—then, but also not till then, will you believe that faith in God is falsehood to humanity. Believe me, such poor notion, though it may pass to-day, cannot stand the test of life to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow. And when it is said that the doctrine of the soul's immortality

is selfish and harmful to humanity, and that a new earth can be built only on the ruins of the faith in the hereafter, say that when you find yourself tempted to baseness and idleness to-day by the thought that the sun will rise to-morrow, when you find honor to your father and your mother a stumbling-stone to care for your children, find your soul so shrunken that you can be faithful to a new friend only by casting off an old, find yourself a better citizen through insularity and protective laws, and find yourself inspired to help the sufferer round the corner more by slighting the men who send gospel and schoolmaster to the night of Africa and the isles of the sea,—then say you will believe it. When you find men agreeing to call it selfish to enjoy the sunshine and the breath of life, selfish to lift up the eyes unto the hills and to stand by the shore because the ocean is sublime and beautiful, selfish to open Plato and Dante and to thirst for knowledge, insight, growth and power, for any noble capacity or any great opportunity,—then, I say, but also not till then, concede the faith in the immortal

nature of you to be a blight upon you and upon society and turn to the new evangel; and until then tell the preacher to go learn clearer notions of self-sacrifice, and that he is the selfish man indeed who, save by soberest thought prolonged and resistless conviction, by moral imperative and not the indulgence of mental agility, impugns what the history of the deepest thought and the dearest hope and the constitution of the soul itself avouch motives most pure and potent to justice, heroism, nobility, and toil.

No, no, my friends, this God's universe and the souls of us are not built upon any such parsimonious plan as that. There is no Wall Street in the soul; no exchange, where to barter hope for duty. Giving is getting there; and infinite responds to infinite, and satisfies. Draw confidently on eternity for all the godlike in you needs; and it is the spirit of God that declares the drafts will all be honored. "What is excellent," says Emerson, "as God lives, is permanent." "When we pronounce the name of man, we pronounce the belief of immortality. All great men find eternity affirmed in the very

promise of their faculties." It is so,—believe it; and, as incurious about the hereafter as about to-morrow, making your motto, if you will, that strong Emersonian word of Thoreau's, "One world at a time!" live your life faithfully and confidently, and do this day's duty well. For this day, too, is God's day; and all eternity is one.

Our debt to Emerson and Parker, I say, is greatest, not for their onslaughts on debasing superstitions and their service to free thought, but for a faith made perfect in reason in the soul's freedom and great affirmations, the eternal right, the immortal life, and the infinite God. My brothers, let not the torch shine dimmer for having come to our hands in its progress! Infinite is the responsibility laid upon us. Our prophets are falling in the high places. These have been years of death. Upon the heads of Whittier and Martineau and Tennyson the hoar-frost already lay as Emerson went. The tolling of the bells of Concord spoke not only of the passing of Emerson, but of the closing of an era, and told us that we are left to ourselves

now. It is the signal for higher duties and the call to nobler manhood. Thank God for these good men and great, but say, as they have taught us, I also am a man, and vow to do your little task, if it be little, even as they did their great ones, "in the manner of a true man, not for a day, but for eternity"; to live as they counselled and commanded, "not commodiously, in the reputable, the plausible, the half, but resolutely, in the whole, the good, the true."

III

Emerson and Carlyle

EMERSON AND CARLYLE

IT has often happened that our writers of history, in describing some striking and significant event, have expressed the wish that some painter might be moved to reproduce it graphically upon his canvas; and not infrequently they have furnished the painter the fullest and most vivid details. I once brought together a dozen such passages in a magazine paper; and bread cast upon the waters seldom comes back in fewer days,—for the painter of one of the new historical pictures in the Memorial Hall in our Massachusetts State House, whom I met during his work, drew a worn copy of the paper from his pocket, and told me that he owed to it the suggestion of his subject and his prompting. I wish that I might likewise prompt some painter to ponder upon the impressive scene in the rooms of the Massachusetts Historical Society when Emerson, on the day of Carlyle's burial, there read his final tribute to his friend. I think that few

158 The Influence of Emerson

scenes in our literary history have been more impressive or significant than that. I wish that picture might hang upon the walls of the Society's new building, or that it might dignify by and by the walls of the new home of the Boston Athenæum,—the Athenæum which Emerson so dearly loved, and upon which he pronounced his warm benediction. Of this memorable scene it chances also that the vivid details have been furnished the painter by the historian,—by Dr. Ellis, the vice-president, afterwards the president, of the Historical Society.

The reading of this tribute to Carlyle before the Massachusetts Historical Society was Emerson's last public act, save only one lecture at Concord. It was a memorable period to a relation as memorable as the friendship of Goethe and Schiller in Germany. It is, indeed, a memorable thing that these two men, greatest teachers of truth to the England and America of their time, should have found each other out so quickly, been drawn together so unerringly, and stood by each other, through all differences of conception, aim, and method, so faithfully.

Often as it has been recurred to in these days, there is not danger that we shall think too much about it.

Carlyle was an honorary member of the Historical Society. Mr. Winthrop, the president, upon hearing of his death, wrote at once to Mr. Emerson to insure his attendance at the commemorative hour which had been appointed. It was felt that he was the only man who, by the warmest relations of personal friendship and the sympathies of kindred genius, could fill the demands of that occasion. The scene was a memorable one,—a scene, writes Dr. Ellis, “never to be forgotten by those who felt what a privilege they enjoyed in taking the full impression of it, with all its vividness and suggestiveness, into heart and thought.” It was on the day, perhaps the very hour, when Carlyle was being laid to rest in silence, by his old friends and the neighbors of his youth, in Ecclefechan churchyard. “A small table, with two chairs for Mr. Emerson and his daughter, was brought into the Dowse library-room, where the meeting was held. The manuscript, long since written, but never

put in print, was a loose one, and only parts of it were to be read by Mr. Emerson. Of the incommunicable features of the scene, very touching to its witnesses was his gentle reference and compliance as he looked to his daughter for direction as to the passages to be read, and to the connection of them. Some slight labial impediments caused an occasional halting in the delivery of elongated words, never favorites with Mr. Emerson. These served, in part, for those delays on words which are so familiar to his hearers as marking his pauses and emphasis. For the rest, he was helped in the initiative utterances of them by the silent lips of his daughter. The apt and racy significance of the most pointed passages came forth in full force and with the old incisiveness and humor. So hushed was the silence, and so intent was the listening, that those who were quick of hearing lost nothing of word or intonation. But even these, the more removed in their seats, one by one drew nearer in a closing circle around the reader. Their faces and inward workings of thought showed the profoundness of their interest, as they waited

for the interpretation of the great philosopher of England by the greatest philosopher of America." *

What Emerson read had been written thirty years and more before, written while he was staying with Carlyle during his London lecturing, in 1848. The thirty years with all that they had brought had made him wish to alter no word that he had ever written of Carlyle. Carlyle had lamented and cursed in plenty meantime, he had gone up the scale and down it, and had left almost nothing free from his knout and besom. The dapper men who write the tales and the women with "three yearnings and a hope" made up their minds about him; the stewards of the etiquettes and the amiabilities and the craftsmen in the literary dainties voted that there was no good in him, and that the clown in him was devil; and the men of the silver

* Dr. Ellis's account was published in *Scribner's Magazine*, May, 1881, along with Emerson's paper. The latter was also printed in the Proceedings of the Historical Society, and is included in Vol. X. of Emerson's Works. It was with a reference to this tribute of Emerson to Carlyle that Dr. Ellis introduced his own tribute to Emerson before the Historical Society the next year.

spoons, the "gig-men," who never waited in Chesterfield's lobby, never knew what heartache was or headache or anarchy at the pit of the stomach, and never ran the risk of discomfiture because never prompted to fly their kites high,—these in the days after "Reminiscences" fed on the cartoons and the caricatures of him, and, like the Gaza mob in Dagon's house, laughed at his cries, over their reduced claret and "Leisure Hour Series," and had a notion that his cries were the summing-up of him. How petty and pitiful they all are, seen from that little upper room above the old Puritan graveyard! and how inconsiderable quite their dainty and proper criticisms beside this life-long, stanch, and changeless friendship of him who truly, as Carlyle himself well said, "had not his equal on earth for perception," who knew Carlyle better than he knew himself, and knew him, with all his biliousness and limitations, for the giant figure of severe sincerity, inflexible righteousness, and lofty purpose, which all the world comes to know him for, as his story is all told, as it has gradually

been told, nothing extenuated and naught set down in malice!

Much has been written upon the remarkable personal relations of Carlyle and Emerson, and upon the affinities and striking contrasts of their genius. Again and again, now that the two lives are rounded, our thoughts turn irresistibly to the old theme.

The last time that Emerson left Concord it was to attend the funeral of Longfellow at Cambridge, just a month before his own death. Fifty years before, almost, in 1835, Longfellow, just called to Harvard, went to Europe, with a letter of introduction from Emerson to Carlyle. Carlyle had just come up to London and settled in Cheyne Row. It was two years after Emerson had first met him among the dreary Craigenputtock moors. His coming to Craigenputtock, said Carlyle to Longfellow then, was "like the visit of an angel." From that time till the end of life the friendship formed so highly was highly maintained, and to high issues. To no other living writer was Emerson drawn so closely as to Carlyle; and Carlyle, among the "narrow built,

164 The Influence of Emerson

considerably perverted men" of London, wrote, "I hear but one voice, and that comes from Concord." "Words cannot tell," he said, "how I prize the old friendship formed there on Craigenputtock Hill, or how deeply I have felt in all that Emerson has written the same aspiring intelligence which shone about us when he came as a young man, and left with us a memory always cherished."

It was in 1833 that Emerson's first visit to Carlyle occurred,—the year after his withdrawal from the ministry. But he had been reading Carlyle already for five years. Carlyle's essays were speaking to many youthful minds in New England, as Emerson himself said, "with an emphasis that hindered them from sleep." It was in 1828 that Emerson began to read Carlyle's articles in the English and Scotch reviews, long before he found out that the writer was "a Thomas Carlyle." It was just then that he wrote the poem,—

"Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home,"—
that first clear utterance of his high ideals

and his scorn of sham and show. It was natural that at such a time his heart should beat in quick response to the sincere and ringing words of the author of the *Life of Schiller* and the articles on "German Literature" and "Richter." He writes of this author, still unknown, in his journal in 1832: "I am cheered and instructed by this paper on 'Corn Law Rhymes,' in the *Edinburgh*, by my Germanic new-light writer, whoever he may be. He gives us confidence in our principles. He assures the truth-lover everywhere of sympathy. Blessed art that makes books, and so joins me to that stranger by this perfect railroad!"

Emerson read "Wilhelm Meister" in Carlyle's translation; and he read the "Burns" and "Novalis" and "Voltaire" and "Johnson" and "Signs of the Times." "Characteristics" appeared just as Emerson was breaking his Unitarian fetters. Carlyle, too, now writes in his journal, "Have long known the Unitarians *intus et in cute*, and never got any *good of them*, or any ill." A wish to see Carlyle had been a factor in de-

termining Emerson's voyage to Europe just after his farewell to his church in 1832. He is looking forward to this in Florence, where, after meeting Landor, he wrote: "It is a mean thing that literary men, philosophers, cannot work themselves clear of this ambition to appear men of the world,—as if every dandy did not understand his business better than they. I hope better things of Carlyle, who has lashed the same folly." In Rome he met a friend of Carlyle, M. Gustave d'Eichthal, who gave him a letter of introduction to Carlyle. John Stuart Mill, whom he met in London, also gave him an introduction. In Italy his greatest want is that he "never meets with men that are great or interesting"; and in Paris he writes in his journal: "A man who was no courtier, but loved men, went to Rome, and there lived with boys. He came to France, and in Paris lives alone, and in Paris seldom speaks. If he do not see Carlyle in Edinburgh, he may go back to America without saying anything in earnest, except to Cranch and Landor." At Edinburgh, where he preached at the Unitarian chapel and where

he first met Alexander Ireland, he found difficulty in discovering Carlyle's whereabouts, but finally learned from the secretary of the university that he was at Craigenputtock, where he had been living for the last five years ; and to Craigenputtock Emerson drove across the country from Dumfries.

In August, 1833, Carlyle was more than usually despondent among his pigs and pots at Craigenputtock ; and the usual despondency was bad enough. On the 24th of August we find him writing in his journal : " So now all this racketing and riding has ended, and I am left here the solitariest stranded, most helpless creature that I have been for many years. ' Months of suffering and painful indolence I see before me ; for in much I am *wrong*, and till it is righted, or on the way to being so, I cannot help myself. . . . The idea of the universe struggles dark and painful in me, which I must deliver out of me or be wretched."

" The next entry in the Journal," says Mr. Froude, " is in another handwriting. It is merely a name — ' Ralph Waldo Emerson.' The Carlyles were sitting alone at din-

ner on a Sunday afternoon at the end of August, when a Dumfries carriage drove to the door, and there stepped out of it a young American, then unknown to fame, but whose influence in his own country equals that of Carlyle in ours, and whose name stands connected with his wherever the English language is spoken. He had read Carlyle's articles and had discerned with the instinct of genius that here was a voice speaking real and fiery convictions, and no longer echoes and conventionalisms. He had come to Europe to study its social and spiritual phenomena; and to the young Emerson, as to the old Goethe, the most important of them appeared to be Carlyle."

Of this famous first visit of Emerson to Carlyle we have accounts from both parties; and Emerson's account is doubly valuable, since it is the only sketch we have of Carlyle's life at Craigenputtock as it was seen by others. We have indeed two accounts of the visit from Emerson,—besides the well-known passage in "English Traits," the interesting letter to Mr. Ireland. The passage in "English Traits," with its pictures of Carlyle's tall,

gaunt form and cliff-like brow, his northern accent and anecdote and humor, the loveliness of Craigenputtock, the talk of pigs and pauperism, the satirical views of literature, is too familiar to need much quoting again. "We went out to walk over long hills, and looked at Criffel, then without his cap, and down into Wordsworth's country. There we sat down and talked of the immortality of the soul. It was not Carlyle's fault that we talked on that topic, for he has the natural disinclination of every nimble spirit to bruise itself against walls, and did not like to place himself where no step can be taken. But he was honest and true, and cognizant of the subtle links that bind ages together, and saw how every event affects all the future. 'Christ died on the tree: that built Dunscore kirk yonder; that brought you and me together.'"

"I spent near twenty-four hours with him," Emerson writes to Mr. Ireland. "He lives with his wife, a most agreeable and accomplished woman, in perfect solitude. There is not a person to speak to within seven miles. He is the most simple, frank,

amiable person. I became acquainted with him at once; we walked over several miles of hills and talked upon all the great questions which interest us most. The comfort of meeting a man of genius is that he speaks sincerely, that he feels himself to be so rich that he is above the meanness of pretending to knowledge which he has not; and Carlyle does not pretend to have solved the great problems, but rather to be an observer of their solution as it goes forward in the world. I asked him at what religious development the concluding passage in his piece in the *Edinburgh Review* upon German literature, and some passages in the piece called 'Characteristics,' pointed. He replied that he was not competent to state it even to himself; he wanted rather to see. My own feeling was that I had met with men of far less power who had yet greater insight into religious truth. He is, as you might guess from his papers, the most catholic of philosophers; he forgives and loves everybody, and wishes each to struggle on in his own place and arrive at his own ends. But his respect for eminent men, or rather

his scale of eminence, is rather the reverse of the popular scale. Scott, Mackintosh, Jeffrey, Gibbon — even Bacon — are no heroes of his. Stranger yet, he hardly admires Socrates, the glory of the Greek world; but Burns and Samuel Johnson. Mirabeau, he said, interested him; and I suppose whoever else has given himself with all his heart to a leading instinct, and has not *calculated* too much. . . . He talks finely, seems to love the broad Scotch, and I loved him very much at once. I am afraid he finds his entire solitude tedious; but I could not help congratulating him upon his treasure in his wife, and I hope they will not leave the moors, 'tis so much better for a man of letters to nurse himself in seclusion than to be filed down to the common level by the compliances and imitations of city society."

Still another word of Emerson's we get concerning Carlyle at this time,—a word in his journal a day or two after the visit: "I never saw more amiableness than is in his countenance. T. C. has made up his mind to pay his taxes to William and Adelaide

Guelf, with great cheerfulness, as long as William is able to compel the payment, and shall cease to do so the moment he ceases to compel them. T. C. prefers London to any other place to live in. John S. Mill the best mind he knows: more purity, more force; has worked himself clear from Benthamism. His only companion to speak to was the minister of Dunscore kirk. And he used to go sometimes to the kirk, and envy the poor parishioners their good faith. But he seldom went, and the minister had grown suspicious of them and did not come to see them." Waiting through tedious, stormy days at Liverpool for his ship to sail, he sighed for Carlyle: "Ah me, Mr. Thomas Carlyle, I would give a gold pound for your wise company this gloomy evening." He writes about Carlyle during the voyage, in that wonderful confession of his own religious thought and feeling. Soon after his arrival home he wrote to James Freeman Clarke, then in Louisville, who in a note had asked him concerning Carlyle: "My recollections of him are most pleasant, and I feel great confidence in his

character. He understands and recognizes his mission. He is perfectly simple and affectionate in his manner, and frank, as he can well afford to be, in his communications. He expressed some impatience of his total solitude, and talked of Paris as a residence. I told him I hoped not; for I should always remember him with respect, meditating in the mountains of Nithsdale. He was cheered, as he ought to be, by learning that his papers were read with interest by young men unknown to him in this continent; and when I specified a piece which had attracted warm commendation from the New Jerusalem people here, his wife said that is always the way; whatever he has writ that he thinks has fallen dead, he hears of two or three years afterward. He has many, many tokens of Goethe's regard, miniatures, medals, and many letters. . . . He told me he had a book which he thought to publish, but was in the purpose of dividing into a series of articles for 'Fraser's Magazine.' I therefore subscribed for that book, which he calls the 'Mud Magazine.' "

Emerson stayed over night, and went to Dumfries in the morning. Two days later Carlyle writes an account of the visit to his mother. "Our third happiness," he says, telling of three happinesses that had befallen them at Craigenputtock, "was the arrival of a certain young unknown friend, named Emerson, from Boston, in the United States, who turned aside so far from his British, French and Italian travels to see me here! He had an introduction from Mill and a Frenchman (Baron d'Eichthal's nephew) whom John knew at Rome. Of course we could do no other than welcome him, the rather as he seemed to be one of the most lovable creatures in himself we had ever looked on. He stayed till next day with us, and talked and heard talk to his heart's content; and left us all really sad to part with him. Jane says it is the first journey since Noah's Deluge undertaken to Craigenputtock for such a purpose."

Carlyle recurs to this visit again and again. It had been to him a red-letter day. He speaks of it to the Americans who come to Cheyne Row, as the time "when that super-

nal vision, Waldo Emerson, dawned on me." "Of you," wrote Margaret Fuller to Emerson, in 1846, telling of her visit to Carlyle, "he spoke with hearty kindness; and he told, with beautiful feeling, a story of some poor farmer, or artisan, in the country, who on Sunday lays aside the cark and care of that dirty English world and sits reading the Essays and looking upon the sea." To Lord Houghton he said: "That man came to see me, I don't know what brought him, and we kept him one night, and then he left us. I saw him go up the hill; I didn't go with him to see him descend. I preferred to watch him mount and vanish like an angel." In the same spirit Mrs. Carlyle writes to Emerson: "Friend, who years ago, in the Desert, descended on us, out of the clouds as it were, and made one day there look like enchantment for us, and left me weeping that it was only one day." Carlyle dwells fondly upon it the evening after his address as Lord Rector of Edinburgh, when his heart was mellowed and he lived his life over; and it finds a place also in his "Reminiscences": "The

176 The Influence of Emerson

visit of Emerson from Concord, and our quiet night of clear fine talk, was also very pretty to both of us."

Emerson, rejoicing in his own escape from the "weary crowd" and "learned clan" of Boston to the quiet fields and lanes of Concord, where man could meet with God in the bush, hoped that Carlyle would not leave the moors. But already, as Emerson himself noted, Carlyle's eyes were turning toward London. "Sartor Resartus" was already written and lying in Fraser's drawer; and when Longfellow, two years later, went to England, carrying Emerson's letter, Carlyle had been living in London a year, and "Sartor" had all been given piecemeal to the world. Not to a very large world. When it began to appear, no Englishman could tell what to make of it. The writer was considered a maniac, and the unlucky editor began to dread the ruin of his magazine. "'Teufelsdröckh' beyond measure unpopular; an oldest subscriber came in to him and said, 'If there is any more of that d—d stuff I will,' etc., etc.; on the other hand, an order from America to send a copy of the magazine

so long as there was anything of Carlyle's in it." The almost utter lack of appreciation in London soon flung Carlyle back into a despondency greater, if possible, than any ever revealed by the journal at Craigenputtock. "My state has been one of those it was almost frightful to speak of," is the first entry in his journal at Cheyne Row, scarcely a month after the settlement there. "Mood tragical, gloomy, as of one forsaken, who had nothing left him *but to get through his task and die*. Despicablest fears of coming to absolute beggary, etc." "In the midst of innumerable discouragements," he adds, "let me mention two small circumstances that are comfortable. The first is a letter from some nameless Irishman in Cork (Fraser read it to me) actually containing a *true* and one of the friendliest possible recognitions. . . . The second is a letter I got to-day from Emerson, of Boston in America; sincere, not baseless, of most exaggerated estimation. Precious is man to man."

The correspondence between Carlyle and Emerson, which fills so important a place in the lives of the two men, was now well

178 The Influence of Emerson

begun. The first letter in this famous correspondence was written by Emerson, May 14, 1834; the last by Carlyle, April 2, 1872. Of this correspondence Whipple justly says: "In richness and fulness of matter, there is nothing superior, nothing, one is prompted to say, equal to it in literary annals." Nowhere else are the deep sympathies and sharp differences of the writers so strikingly revealed. Dr. Holmes estimates it well: "The hatred of unreality was uppermost with Carlyle; the love of what is real and genuine with Emerson. Those old moralists, the weeping and the laughing philosophers, find their counterparts in every thinking community. Carlyle did not weep, but he scolded; Emerson did not laugh, but in his gravest moments there was a smile waiting for the cloud to pass from his forehead. The Duet they chanted was a Miserere with a Te Deum for its Antiphon; a *De Profundis* answered by a *Sursum Corda*. 'The ground of my existence is black as death,' says Carlyle. 'Come and live with me a year,' says Emerson, 'and if you do not like New

England well enough to stay, one of these years (when the "History" has passed its ten editions, and been translated into as many languages) I will come and dwell with you.'"

The criticisms of each other's style are most frank. In his first letter, Emerson remonstrates with Carlyle upon his "defying diction"; and he writes in his diary, "O, Carlyle! the merit of glass is not to be seen, but to be seen through." Carlyle finds that Emerson's sentences do not "cohere," do not "rightly stick to their foregoers and their followers; the paragraphs not as a beaten ingot, but as a beautiful *bag of duck shot* held together by canvas." In his diary Emerson writes: "My affection for that man really incapacitates me from reading his book. The pages which to others look so rich and alluring to me have a frigid and marrowless air for the warm hand and heart I have an estate in, and the living eye of which I can almost discern across the sea some sparkles."

In 1836 Emerson edited "Sartor Resartus," from the pages of *Fraser*, and had it published in Boston, himself writing a

preface for the book. He had lent the numbers of *Fraser* to Miss Jackson at Plymouth, and we have accounts of the excitement which they caused in her circle and in others. "The foreign dress and aspect of the work," Emerson said in his preface, "are quite superficial, and cover a genuine Saxon heart. We believe no book has been published for many years written in a more sincere style of idiomatic English, or which discovers an equal mastery over all the riches of language. The author makes ample amends for the occasional eccentricity of his genius, not only by frequent bursts of pure splendor, but by the wit and sense which never fail him." He has "an insight into the manifold wants and tendencies of human nature, which is very rare among our popular authors. The philosophy and the purity of moral sentiment which inspire the work will find their way to the heart of every lover of virtue."

Emerson received £150 from the sale of this American edition of "*Sartor Resartus*," — a sum which must have been welcome enough in Cheyne Row, considering

the rather low ebb of the housekeeping there at the time. This was before "Sartor" had been published at all in book form in England, and while there were probably not a dozen persons between Whitechapel and Chelsea who thought it anything else than a mass of extravagances and absurdities. Carlyle, having occasion at this time to make an extract from "Sartor," said parenthetically, "I quote from a New England book." The interest in Carlyle was for long much greater in America than in England; and not a few of Emerson's letters enclose drafts for copyright. "The French Revolution" found its adequate recognition in Boston long before it found it in London.

In 1838 Emerson collected Carlyle's essays and miscellaneous writings, from the pages of the English reviews, and published them in three volumes, with an introduction; and this was done also before the essays were put into a book in England. All of the zealous New England Transcendentalists in that time were close readers of Carlyle; many of them owed to him their principal knowledge of German liter-

182 The Influence of Emerson

ature; most of them were profoundly affected by him. Carlyle loved the *Dial*—"yet with a kind of shudder." Years before the *Dial* was started, there had been talk of another journal, with Carlyle as its editor. Emerson especially wished that he might come to New England. "Shall we not bid him come," he writes to James Freeman Clarke in 1834, "and be Poet and Teacher to a most scattered flock wanting a shepherd?"

"Past and Present" was published during the brief existence of the *Dial*. Emerson edited it for America, and wrote about it in the *Dial*, pronouncing it a political tract with which we have nothing to compare since Milton and Burke. "It is such an appeal to the conscience and honor of England as cannot be forgotten. . . . When the political aspects are so calamitous that the sympathies of the man overpower the habits of the poet, a higher than literary inspiration may succor him. It is a costly proof of character, that the most renowned scholar of England should take his reputation in his hand and should descend into the ring; and

he has added to his love whatever honor his opinions may forfeit. To atone for this departure from the vows of the scholar and his eternal duties, to this secular charity, we have at least this gain, that here is a message which those to whom it was addressed cannot choose but hear." Emerson declares Carlyle to be "the first domestication of the modern system with its infinity of details into style,"—all the vast and multifarious movements of our present civilization best represented in him. For "London and Europe tunnelled, graded, corn-lawed, with trade-nobility, and East and West Indies for dependencies, and America with the Rocky Hills in the horizon, have never before been conquered in literature." Of the faults of the book Emerson says: "It appears to us as a certain disproportion in the picture, caused by the obtrusion of the whims of the painter. In this work, as in his former labors, Mr. Carlyle reminds us of a sick giant. His humors are expressed with so much force of constitution that his fancies are more attractive and more credible than the sanity of duller men. But the habitual

exaggeration of the tone wearies while it stimulates. It is felt to be so much deduction from the universality of the picture. It is not serene sunshine, but everything is seen in lurid storm-lights. Every object attitudinizes to the very mountains, and stars almost, under the refractions of this wonderful humorist; and, instead of the common earth and sky, we have a Martin's Creation or Judgment Day."

The editing of "Sartor Resartus" and Carlyle's Essays may be regarded as the beginning of Emerson's own literary career. He doubtless looked upon the introduction of Carlyle to America as the best thing that a literary man could do at that time. "If the good Heaven have any word to impart to this unworthy generation," he wrote, "here is one scribe qualified and clothed for its occasion." Emerson published nothing himself during his days in the ministry, and seems to have written nothing on literary themes. "Nature" did not appear till 1836; and it was not until after the publication of "Sartor" that the oration on the "American Scholar" came and the epoch-

making address to the Harvard Divinity School,—the first clear revelations to Boston and Cambridge of the nature of the new light which was rising. The Harvard address was written at the very time that he was editing Carlyle's *Essays*, and we may imagine that he refreshed himself in the writing by spells of recourse to "*Signs of the Times*" and "*Characteristics*."

Emerson's oration on the "*American Scholar*" filled Carlyle with delight, as he had already been delighted with "*Nature*," which he had lent about to all his acquaintance that "had a sense for such things." He justly anticipated the verdict of the years when he wrote to Emerson, "I call it *The Foundation and Ground-plan on which you may build whatsoever of great and true has been given you to build.*"

We now find Carlyle, on his side, introducing Emerson to England. Emerson's first little volume of *Essays* was published in 1841; and the same year Carlyle had it reprinted in England, with a preface by himself,—a preface so memorable, so characteristic of Carlyle, so justly appreciative

186 The Influence of Emerson

of Emerson and so unfamiliar, it is to be feared, to most American readers to-day, that a few passages from it may profitably be cited here : *—

“The name of Ralph Waldo Emerson is not entirely new to England; distinguished travellers bring us tidings of such a man; fractions of his writings have found their way into the hands of the curious here; fitful hints that there is in New England some spiritual notability called Emerson glide through reviews and magazines. . . . Emerson’s writings and speakings amount to something; and yet hitherto, as it seems to me, this Emerson is far less notable for what he has spoken or done than for the many things he has not spoken and has forborne to do. With uncommon interest I have learned that this, and in such a never-resting, locomotive country too, is one of those rare men who have withal the invaluable talent of sitting still. That an educated man of good gifts and opportunities, after looking at the public arena and even trying

* The whole is given in Mr. George Willis Cooke’s volume on Emerson, that invaluable repository of so much about Emerson not otherwise easily accessible.

— not with ill success — what its tasks and its prizes might amount to, should retire for long years into rustic obscurity and, amid the all-pervading jingle of dollars and loud chaffering of ambitions and promotions, should quietly, with cheerful deliberateness, sit down to spend his life, not in Mammon-worship or the hunt for reputation, influence, place or any outward advantage whatsoever; this, when we get note of it, is a thing really worth noting. For myself, I have looked over with no common feeling to this brave Emerson, seated by his rustic hearth on the other side of the ocean (yet not altogether parted from me either), silently communing with his own soul and with the God's World it finds itself alive in yonder. Pleasures of Virtue, Progress of the Species, Black Emancipation, New Tariff, Eclecticism, Locofocoism, Ghost of Improved Socinianism, these, with many other ghosts and substances, are squeaking, jabbering, according to their capabilities, round this man. To one man among the sixteen millions their jabber is all unmusical. The silent voices of the stars above and of the

green earth beneath are profitable to him,—tell him gradually that these others are but ghosts, which will shortly have to vanish; that the Life-Fountain these proceed out of does not vanish. The words of such a man — what words he finds good to speak — are worth attending to.”

This from Carlyle, who at the same time was writing to Sterling, “Emerson seems to me like a kind of New Era,” while most proper New England people looked upon Emerson as little less beside himself than the Londoners had thought the author of “Sartor Resartus,” * and while the greater part of the five hundred copies of “Nature,” which were all that the bookseller ventured to print, still lay on the bookseller’s shelves, destined to be well represented there for ten years to come. The critics found the “Essays” more devoid of real meaning than anything which often came into their hands. One, of Princeton, thought that such essays

* “The majority of the sensible, practical community regarded him as mystical, as crazy or affected, as an imitator of Carlyle, as racked and revolutionary, as a fool, as one who did not himself know what he meant.”—*James Freeman Clarke, Lecture on the Religious Philosophy of Emerson.*

could be produced during a lifetime, as rapidly as a human pen could be made to move. Harvard College, at the hands of one professor, found the Essays full of "extravagance, overweening self-confidence, ancient errors, and misty rhetoric," and at the hands of another found his "professed poetry" the "most prosaic and unintelligible stuff." Sound Unitarianism hastened to repudiate the address before the Divinity School as the "lucubrations of an individual who had no connection with the school whatever," and notions "utterly distasteful to Unitarian ministers generally, by whom they were esteemed neither good divinity nor good sense." Only Dr. Channing told Mr. Ware and Mr. Norton that they were fighting shadows, and that Emerson's God was "*alive* and not *dead*"; and Theodore Parker, whose true life was now beginning, said that it was Emerson who fed his lamp. It was not Carlyle alone who measured the new man aright, nor in Old England only that the prophet was received. But, steadily as Emerson's reputation grew at home, it grew even more rapidly in England,—just

as the recognition of Carlyle was quicker here than there. As to Carlyle's intellectual influence upon Emerson himself, an English critic has justly said, "It would be hard to lay the finger on a passage in Emerson which he could not conceivably have come by if Carlyle had never lived." Yet another English scholar has said equally justly, "Carlyle's frank recognition of him as a spiritual and intellectual equal must have had a most stimulating effect on him." It was very largely owing to Carlyle's introduction and hearty indorsement that Emerson's Essays were at once so widely read in England and that his fame as a lecturer became so great as to lead to the invitation from the Mechanics' Institutes for the courses of lectures in England. He went to England in October, 1847, simply writing to Carlyle that he intended to sail "about the first of October." "Contrive in some sure way," wrote Carlyle to Mr. Ireland in Manchester, "that Emerson may get hold of my note the instant he lands in England. I shall be permanently grieved otherwise. And, on the whole, if you can,

get him put safe into the express train, and shot up hither, as the first road he goes."

This invitation, Emerson wrote his wife, "I could no more resist than I could gravitation"; and he hastened to London. "At ten at night the door was opened to me by Jane Carlyle, and the man himself was behind her with a lamp in the entry. They were very little changed from their old selves of fourteen years ago, when I left them at Craigenputtock. 'Well,' said Carlyle, 'here we are, shovelled together again.' The floodgates of his talk are quickly opened, and the river is a great and constant stream. We had large communication that night until nearly one o'clock, and at breakfast next morning it began again." Then came many great walks about London, "Carlyle melting all Westminster and London down with his talk and laughter as he walked;" and, mixed with the many lectures and the much society, happy evenings and mornings by the fireside. "Carlyle and his wife live on beautiful terms. Nothing can be more engaging than their ways, and in her bookcase all his books are

inscribed to her, as they come, from year to year, each with some significant lines."

Yet, as the weeks of Emerson's English lecturing went on, it is clear that the sharp differences in temperament and in opinion between the two men made themselves seriously felt. Carlyle writes to a friend early in Emerson's visit: "We had immense talking with him here, but found he did not give us much to chew the cud upon,—found, in fact, that he came with the rake rather than the shovel. He is a pure, high-minded man; but I think his talent is not quite so high as I had anticipated." He found Emerson's doctrines "too airy and thin." A little later he writes in his diary concerning Emerson: "Very *exotic*—differed much from me, as a gymnosophist sitting idle on a flowery bank may do from a wearied worker and wrestler passing that way with many of his bones broken." When finally Emerson returned home, Carlyle, recording the fact that he "parted with him in peace," and paying another tender tribute to him for his great friendliness to himself, comments: "A spiritual *son* of mine? Yes, in a good

degree, but gone into philanthropy and other moonshine." "Carlyle, at this time," as Cabot says, "was in a mood in which Emerson's optimism was apt to call forth 'showers of vitriol' upon all men and things. They did not meet often nor with much pleasure on either side; but their regard and affection for each other were unabated." Earlier in his biography of Emerson, speaking generally of the two men's characteristics, in his account of the beginning of their friendship, Cabot says, not with entire truth, but emphasizing the point which now affected them: "Neither cared much for the other's ideas; to each, indeed, the leading idea of the other, the message he wished to bear to his generation, was a delusion. Had they been required respectively to define by a single trait the farthest reach of folly in a theory of conduct, Carlyle would have selected the notion that mankind need only to be set free and 'led to think and act for themselves, and Emerson the doctrine that they need only to be well governed." These differences were accentuated to the highest degree at the time of Emerson's

194 The Influence of Emerson

visit to London in 1847. Carlyle was surcharged with Cromwell; Emerson was hospitably entertaining the doctrine of non-resistance in its extremest form, and even venturing opinions which, fathered to-day by Kropotkin and his friends, would be called rank anarchy. Espinasse, summing up the talk at Carlyle's, declares that "Emerson's theory was that the wise man should have such perfect confidence in the on-goings of the universe, the development of the human race included, as to refrain from fighting with pen or tongue, not less than with sword, for the good and against the bad, and should regard even the best government and legislation as superfluous interferences with the ordained economy of things." It was of this visit to England, it will be remembered, that "English Traits" was born. The chapter on Stonehenge is an account of Emerson's visit to the famous ruin in company with Carlyle, and contains the record of significant conversation; but, although Emerson tells us here that he "opened the dogma of no-government and non-resistance" and said sweeping things

about "the bankruptcy of the vulgar musket-worship," it is clear that the record is incomplete. Espinasse tells us that after this trip to Stonehenge Carlyle was full of indignant protest at Emerson's limitless *laissez-faire*, which, he said, would prevent a man from "rooting out a thistle." Caroline Fox says that Carlyle tried to shake Emerson's optimism by taking him the round of the horrors and abominations of London, asking after each exhibition, "Do you believe in the devil now?" When Emerson at the Cheyne Row fireside emphasized his belief that man everywhere, in whatever sin or degradation, was always tending upwards, Mrs. Carlyle's indignation, Espinasse tells us, "knew no bounds, and for some time she could scarcely speak of Emerson with patience." Espinasse would make us believe that the friction with Mrs. Carlyle was rather serious, saying, "Emerson's admiration for her abated visibly, till at last he was heard to say that the society of 'the lady' was worth cultivating mainly because she was the person who could tell you most about the husband." All these

196 The Influence of Emerson

things are to be taken for what they are worth; and they are not worth very much. They witness to the great personal and philosophical differences between Emerson and Carlyle; but their mutual admiration and affection went on after the conversations just the same as before them. In the Stonehenge chapter itself, Emerson pays special tribute to Carlyle's genius, penetration, and severe theory of duty; and Carlyle writes to Emerson soon after his return to America, "Though I see well enough what a great deep cleft divides us, in our ways of practically looking at the world, I see also (as probably you do yourself) where are the rock-strata, miles deep, united again, and the two poor souls are at one."

The Life of Cromwell had been published shortly before this time of Emerson's lecturing in England, and Carlyle was now beginning his preparations for the interminable "Frederick." Now and then, as this work went on, a letter came from Emerson; "and, amid all the smoke and mist of this world," said Carlyle, "it is always as a

window flung open to the azure. During all this last weary work of mine, his words have been nearly the only ones about the thing done to which I have inwardly responded." It was a weary work indeed for Carlyle; and, when at last it was completed, he wrote to Emerson to express the sorrowful conviction that the years spent on it had been wasted, as the more he had to do with Frederick the less heroic he found him. This may have been extravagant,—it was the expression of an exhausted and despondent time; but certain it is that the effect of his long years upon the "Frederick" was not wholesome for Carlyle; and perhaps it was this absorption in Prussian absolutism as much as anything else which betrayed him into the positions which he took at the beginning of our Civil War, and which he defended with a coarseness so brutal,—for it must be said,—which Americans found it so hard to forgive. The bitter feelings against him which came to his ears from America were very painful to Carlyle. "They think," he cried sharply to an American friend, "some of you think,

198 The Influence of Emerson

I am no friend to America. But I love America, the true America, the country of Emerson and Emerson's friends, the country of honest toilers and brave thinkers." It was Emerson who dealt the final, staggering blow which awakened Carlyle from his false dream of the conditions of society in the Southern States; for, though he awakened slowly, he did awake at last. "It was early in October, 1864," says Mr. Conway, "that I found him reading and rereading a letter from Emerson." The "voice from Concord" had come to him now freighted with tenderness indeed, but also with terrible truth. The letter spoke of old friendship, mentioned pleasantly a friend whom Carlyle had introduced, and spoke of the satisfaction with which he had read the fourth volume of the "Frederick," especially the evidence it gave that many years had not yet broken any fibre of Carlyle's force,—“a pure joy to me, who abhor the inroads which time makes in me and my friends. To live too long is the capital misfortune.” Then, says Mr. Conway, Emerson's sentences turned to fire,—fire in which love was quick as enthu-

siasm was burning. He said he had lately lamented that Carlyle had not visited America. It would have made it impossible that his name should ever be cited against the side of humanity, and would have shown him the necessities and aspirations struggling up in the free states, though but unsteadily articulated there. "The battle of humanity is at this hour in America." He longed to enlist him with his thunderbolt on the right side. Could not the thoughtful minds of England see the finger-pointings of the gods which, above the understanding, feed the hopes and guide the wills of men? As for Carlyle himself, there must be some mistake. Perhaps he was experimenting on idlers. But he could not be disguised from those eyes that saw deep. They knew him better than he knew himself, perhaps, certainly better than others knew him. And so Carlyle felt when he read in this letter, at the close, "Keep the old kindness, which I prize above words."

"No danger but *that* will be kept," said Carlyle. "For the rest, this letter, the first I have received from Emerson this long

time, fills me with astonishment. That the clearest mind now living—for I don't know Emerson's equal on earth for perception—should write so is quasi-miraculous. I have tried to look into the middle of things in America, and I have seen a people cutting throats indefinitely to put the negro into a position for which all experience shows him unfit."

Emerson's letter now came as the voice of Carlyle's good angel. "Never again," says Mr. Conway, "did I hear Carlyle speak as before concerning the issue in America." His esteem for America and Americans steadily grew, and his eyes seemed again turning with hope to the West.

In the Concord household the affection for Carlyle and the pre-eminent interest in him had never wavered. We get many glimpses of them. One interesting glimpse is that, in one of the years soon after Emerson's London lecturing, which John Albee gives us. The talk had turned to Carlyle, and Emerson produced Carlyle's photograph, with the heavy lower jaw and

lip, "between which as between millstones," he said with loving admiration, "every humbug was sure to be pulverized." "And then," says Albee, "he good-naturedly imitated Carlyle for me; he was an excellent mimic." Soon after the war Carlyle conceived the thought of presenting to New England the books which he had collected and used in the preparation of his "Cromwell" and "Frederick the Great,"—"of testifying," he wrote, "my gratitude to New England—New England acting mainly through one of her sons called Waldo Emerson." There was correspondence between the two, the relative claims of the Boston Public Library and the Harvard Library were considered, and finally it was settled by Emerson's judgment that all should go together to Harvard, where to-day they constitute one of the university's sacred treasures. Emerson wrote that he should add the copy of Wood's "Athenæ Oxonienses," given him by Carlyle in 1848, "in which every pen and pencil mark of yours is notable,"—as may also be said concerning the Cromwell books.

Niagara had been safely shot by us, "nigger question" and all, the prodigal Southern States had been taken home again, and the Geneva tribunal had duly assessed John Bull for his bad manners, when Emerson, in October, 1872, set out for his last visit to Europe. In London he found new delight in his friendship for Carlyle. "I found my way to Chelsea," he writes his wife, "and spent two or three hours with Carlyle in his study. He opened his arms and embraced me, after seriously gazing for a time: 'I am glad to see you once more in the flesh,' — and we sat down and had a steady outpouring for two hours and more." Carlyle wrote concerning it, "It's a very striking and curious spectacle to behold a man in these days so confidently cheerful as Emerson." Mrs. Carlyle was now dead, and Carlyle had entered into the evening twilight, — "so aged-looking," Emerson found; but Emerson's visit was made a festival by his old English friends. "There is no other American," wrote one, "who has in England a company of such friends as those who gather about

Mr. Emerson; no one for whom so many rare men and women have a reverence so affectionate; no one who holds to the best section of English students and of her most religious and cultivated minds a relation so delightful to both." This interest was shown in the organization in England, in 1869, of an association, which Emerson found in full life on this last visit, devoted to the publication and diffusion of the works of Carlyle and Emerson,—its kindred objects, the diffusion of education, the elevation of woman, international peace, the broadening of religion, and the general diffusion of art and culture.

Emerson returned to America in 1873. It was just forty years from the time when, a young man of thirty, he had first found Carlyle on the Craigenputtock moors. Mill, who had introduced him to Carlyle, died in the same month (May, 1873) that Emerson now left Carlyle for the last time. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Landor, Clough, Leigh Hunt, Dickens, Faraday, Thackeray, Macaulay, Arnold, Mrs. Somerville, and others, whom he had met during his previous visits

to England, were dead. Channing and Parker, Margaret Fuller and Francis, among the old Transcendentalists and reformers, were dead. Sumner and Garrison, Ripley and Brownson, Dwight and Cranch, Cabot, W. H. Channing, Hedge, Bartol, Clarke, Furness, and Miss Peabody still lived, although so many of them were destined to precede Emerson to the undiscovered country. Hawthorne and Thoreau were dead. Alcott alone remained his neighbor, out of the once bright Concord constellation. Carlyle was now almost eighty, and his working life was done. Emerson's work too was almost over. In 1874 he was put in nomination by the independent party among the students of Glasgow University for the office of Lord Rector, and received five hundred votes against seven hundred for Disraeli, who was elected. "I count that vote," Emerson wrote to Dr. Hutchison Stirling, "as quite the fairest laurel that has ever fallen on me;" as Carlyle counted his own election by the students of Edinburgh the highest honor ever paid himself.

In 1874 Emerson published "Parnas-

sus"; in 1875 he spoke at the centennial of the Concord fight, upon the very spot where the militia

"Fired the shot heard round the world";

in 1875 also he published "Letters and Social Aims"; in 1879 he read a paper before the Harvard Divinity School on "The Preacher," the last expression of his religious views, and fit complement to the famous address of forty years before. In this year, and again in 1880, he read papers before the Concord School of Philosophy, in which, as the offspring of the old Transcendentalism, he was so deeply interested; and in 1880 he gave his hundredth lecture before the Concord Lyceum, on "New England Life and Letters." His last public acts were the reading of his tribute to Carlyle, before the Massachusetts Historical Society, Feb. 10, 1881, and his lecture on "Aristocracy," at the Concord School of Philosophy, in July of the same year. The last time he left his house was to hear an essay by Dr. Harris of the Concord School, and then his neighbor, on Carlyle's "Sartor

Resartus." He died April 27, 1882. Of his final illness, the days just before his death, his son writes: "Though dulled to other impressions, to one he was fresh as long as he could understand anything, and, while even the familiar objects of his study began to look strange, he smiled and pointed to Carlyle's head and said, 'That is my man, my good man!' I mention this because it has been said that this friendship cooled, and that my father had for long years neglected to write to his early friend. He was loyal while life lasted, but had been unable to write a letter for years before he died. Their friendship did not need letters." It is a noteworthy thing that in his last letter to Carlyle, little divining that it was the last, Emerson should have cast a glance back over the long years of their friendship and penned this general judgment: "I count it my eminent happiness to have been so nearly your contemporary, and your friend,—permitted to detect by its rare light the new star almost before the Easterners had seen it, and to have found no disappointment, but joyful confirmation

rather, in coming close to its orb." That was Emerson's final verdict, and it will stand. And Carlyle a little later wrote of "the silent but sacred covenant that exists between us two to the end."

Much as there was in common in the aims and character and doctrine of Carlyle and Emerson, there was something, too, in common in the externalities of their lives, and much in the courses of their culture. Carlyle was almost a decade the older, born in the year of the "whiff of grape-shot," and just as "Wilhelm Meister" had been given to the world; while Emerson's birth was just before the death of Kant and the crowning of Napoleon as emperor. Carlyle came of the old Covenanting stock; Emerson was preceded by eight generations of Puritan ministers. Both were sent to the university, both destined, like Lessing, Kant, and Fichte, and so many of the great Germans whom they loved, for the ministry. Carlyle preached at least one sermon,—“a weak, flowery, sentimental piece,” he calls it, on the text, “Before I was afflicted, I went astray”; but he did not enter the ministry,

for the same reason that Emerson so soon abandoned it,—because he “found he did not believe the doctrines of his father’s kirk.” Emerson, the son of the minister of the First Church of Boston, became himself the minister of the Second Church; but the ministry was for three or four years only, ending with his differences with his congregation about the Lord’s Supper, although he preached occasionally afterwards for several years. The strongest praise I have ever read of Carlyle as a possible preacher was that he might have become a second Chalmers. Alexander Ireland, who heard Emerson in the Unitarian chapel in Edinburgh in 1833, says, “Not long before this I had listened to a wonderful sermon by Dr. Chalmers; . . . but I must confess that the pregnant thoughts and serene self-possession of the young Boston minister had a greater charm for me than all the rhetorical splendors of Chalmers.”

Both men, on leaving college, played the schoolmaster for a time; and both, when their pedagogical and theological chapters were ended, embarked alike upon the in-

dependent literary career, and never assumed any official or professional position. Carlyle passed nearly all his working life in his library. Emerson transferred his ministry from the church to the platform, and remained a public man. It was his choice ; it was his joy. He craved public influence and relationship to men. Of a certain promising young literary man he said, " I doubted his genius when I saw that he did not seek a hearing." It was on the lecture platform, above all other places, that Emerson was at home. " My pulpit is the lyceum platform," he said. He was *par excellence* Emerson the Lecturer : he may almost be said to have founded the Lyceum in this country ; and, as has been remarked by another, he certainly gave it its form and character and made it the efficient instrument of instruction and reform which it was for the third of a century and more during which he occupied the platform. He was during this time, as Mr. Lowell has said, the most steadily attractive lecturer in America, always drawing, the charm of his voice, his manner, and his matter continually winning new multitudes, while never losing

210 The Influence of Emerson

its power over his earlier hearers. "The announcement that such a pleasure as a new course of lectures by him is coming," wrote Mr. Lowell, "to people as old as I am, is something like those forebodings of spring that prepare us every year for a familiar novelty, none the less novel, when it arrives, because it is familiar." Almost everything that Emerson wrote after the essay on "Nature" was written originally for the platform. "Representative Men," "English Traits," "The Conduct of Life," "Letters and Social Aims," "Society and Solitude,"—nearly everything that goes to make up these books had served first and many times as lectures. The impression which Emerson made upon the platform was captivating and commanding. His voice and manner alike exercised a unique charm. "I have heard some great speakers and some accomplished orators," said Lowell, "but never any that so moved and persuaded men as he." "His voice and manner," writes Andrew D. White, referring to the first time he heard Emerson lecture, "seemed to me the best I had ever known." "Emerson's voice," said Whipple,

“had a strange power which affected me more than any other voice I ever heard on the stage or on the platform.” Such tributes might be multiplied indefinitely, alike from those who heard him in America and in England. In many places in England Emerson gave the lectures on “Representative Men,” which treat several of the same subjects,—Shakespeare, Napoleon and, I was about to say, Goethe, but I remember that Carlyle purposely omitted Goethe from his course, complimentarily telling his hearers that they were not up to it,—which Carlyle had treated in his course on “Heroes and Hero-worship” delivered during his brief experience as a lecturer in London, ten years before. In London Emerson delivered a special course on the “Mind and Manners of the Nineteenth Century,” Carlyle being among his hearers. These lectures were delivered in the same place, evidently,—Portman Square,—where Carlyle’s own lectures were given. “Edward Street, Portman Square, the only free room there was,” he says in “Reminiscences.” Emerson also gave certain lectures in Exeter

Hall, at one of which Carlyle was present. "He was seated by the joyful committee," Emerson writes his wife, "directly behind me as I spoke — a thing odious to me." Froude tells us that the first time he ever saw Carlyle was at Emerson's last London lecture, where he was pointed out to him by Clough; and he says, "I heard his loud, kindly, contemptuous laugh when the lecturer ended." Carlyle's highest praise of the first lectures, to Emerson himself, had been that they were "Emersonian": to others he called them "Moonshine." But he spoke of some of the later lectures as "intellectual sonatas"; and Emerson himself was "the seraphic man."

Carlyle abominated lecturing. "Detestable mixture of prophecy and play-actorism," is the way he describes his work as a lecturer, in "Reminiscences"—"vilest welter of odious confusions, horrors and repugnancies." "Nothing could well be hatefuller to me; but I was obliged. . . . How we drove together, we poor two, to our place of execution, she with a little drop of brandy to give me at the very last!" Yet Harriet

Martineau, who was present at many of the lectures, assures us that the merits of his discourses were so great that he might probably have gone on year after year with improving success and perhaps ease; but the struggle with nervous excitement and ill-health was too severe. Carlyle delivered three or four courses of these lectures in London. "Our main revenue three or four years now was lectures." The last of these courses was that on "Heroes and Hero-worship," the concluding words of which will be remembered.

The second course was on the "History of Literature, or the Successive Periods of European Culture from Homer to Goethe." A careful abstract of these lectures, by Professor Edward Dowden, from what was evidently a very full manuscript report, has been published. The history of culture is viewed, in these lectures, as a succession of faiths, interrupted by periods of scepticism. The faith of Greece and Rome is succeeded by the Christian faith, with an interval of pagan scepticism. The Christian faith, after the interval of Christian scepticism repre-

214 The Influence of Emerson

sented by Voltaire and culminating in the French Revolution, is transforming itself into a new thing not yet capable of definition, of which Goethe in "Wilhelm Meister" and the "Westöstlicher Divan" is a herald. Many passages in these lectures, on Dante, Shakespeare, Luther and the Reformation, the French Revolution, and German Literature, are much the same as we find in others of Carlyle's writings, but put in a way often fresh and always forcible.

Carlyle's first lecture in London was on May 1, 1837. Dr. Chalmers was also lecturing in London at the time; and those interested in coincidences may like to know that on the evening of that day Browning's "Strafford" was produced for the first time by Macready at Covent Garden Theatre. The *Times* gave a very friendly notice of this first lecture by Carlyle, observing that "the lecturer, who seems new to the mere technicalities of public speaking, exhibited proofs, before he had done, of many of its higher and nobler attributes, gathering self-possession as he proceeded." It was agonizing business for Carlyle; but Mrs. Carlyle

“had a steady hope” in him. The impression which he made as a lecturer was really much better than he would lead us to suppose. A writer in the *Examiner*, perhaps Leigh Hunt, in noticing the first two lectures on the “History of Literature,” said: “He again extemporizes, he does not read. We doubted, on hearing the Monday’s lecture, whether he would ever attain in this way to the fluency as well as depth for which he ranks among celebrated talkers in private; but Friday’s discourse relieved us. He strode away like Ulysses himself, and had only to regret, in common with his audience, the limits to which the one hour confined him.” George Ticknor was present at the ninth lecture of this course, and he noted in his diary (June 1, 1838): “He is a rather small, spare, ugly Scotchman, with a strong accent, which I should think he takes no pains to mitigate. To-day he spoke, as I think he commonly does, without notes, and therefore as nearly extempore as a man can who prepares himself carefully, as was plain he had done. He was impressive, I think, though such lecturing could not well be very

popular; and in some parts, if he were not poetical, he was picturesque." Ticknor estimates the audience at about one hundred.

We read that Emerson had a thousand hearers at his lecture on Montaigne, in London, and that he was greeted with loud applause. Perhaps this contrast in point of platform popularity was one thing that made Mrs. Carlyle, as Espinasse fancied, view Emerson with "a certain wife-like jealousy, as a sort of rival of her husband," although the latter's platform days had long been over. We have pleasant glimpses of Emerson's London lectures from Henry Crabbe Robinson and Harriet Martineau. After the first London lecture the following account appeared in *Ferrol's Newspaper*, and it is interesting as preserving the impression which Emerson made as a lecturer upon an English audience in which Carlyle sat: "Precisely at four o'clock the lecturer glided in, and suddenly appeared at the reading-desk. Tall, thin, his features aquiline, his eye piercing and fixed, the effect, as he stood quietly before his audience, was at first somewhat startling, and then nobly im-

pressive. Having placed his manuscript on the desk with nervous rapidity, and paused, the lecturer then quickly and, as it were, with a flash of action, turned over the first leaf, whispering at the same time, 'Gentlemen and *ladies*.' The initial sentences were pronounced in a low tone, a few words at a time, hesitatingly, as if then extemporaneously meditated and not, as they really were, premeditated and forewritten. Time was thus given for the audience to meditate them, too. Meanwhile, the meaning, as it were, was dragged from under the veil and covering of the expression, and ever and anon a particular phrase was so emphatically italicized as to command attention. There was, however, nothing like acquired elocution, no regular intonation, in fact, none of the usual oratorical artifices, but for the most part a shapeless delivery (only varied by certain nervous twitches and angular movements of the hands and arms curious to see and even to smile at), and calling for much co-operation on the part of the auditor to help out its shortcomings. Along with all this, there was an eminent *bonhomie*, earnestness

and sincerity, which bespoke sympathy and respect—nay, more, secured veneration.”

Carlyle's love of lecturing evidently did not increase with his experience of it; and from the time of “Heroes and Hero-worship” to the address as Lord Rector of Edinburgh I do not think he ever spoke in public. The only passage which I recall in his writings in which he speaks with some real enthusiasm about lecturing or preaching is in a letter to Emerson at the time of his lectures on “Heroes and Hero-worship” and when Emerson was trying to induce him to come to America. He wrote after one of these lectures, along with sundry critical observations upon his lecturing, that he had been “gratified nevertheless to see how the rudest *speech* of a man's heart goes into men's hearts, and is the welcomest thing there. Withal I regretted that I had not six months of preaching, whereby to learn to preach and explain things fully! In the fire of the moment I had all but decided on setting out for America this autumn, and preaching far and wide like a very lion there. Quit your paper formulas, my brethren,—equivalent to

old wooden idols, *undivine* as they; in the name of God understand that you are alive and that God is alive! Did the Upholsterer make this Universe? Were you created by the Tailor? I tell you, and conjure you to believe me literally, No, a thousand times, No! Thus did I mean to preach, on 'Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic,' in America too."

For many years at this period of his life Carlyle's thoughts turned much towards America. The important chapter in the history of English Puritanism which the founding of New England constituted deeply affected him. The "Mayflower," to him, bore a richer freight than the "Argo," and the thought of her desperately breasting the seas stirred his eloquence. But it was not simply the historical that moved him. As late as 1849 he writes to Emerson of the Western frontiersman and the America waiting for its poet, and waiting to be born, in a buoyant and prophetic strain, such as might find place in the page of Whitman or of Emerson himself: "How beautiful to think of lean, tough Yankee settlers, tough

as gutta-percha, with most *occult* unsubduable fire in their belly, steering over the Western Mountains to annihilate the jungle, and bring bacon and corn out of it for the Posterity of Adam! The Pigs in about a year eat up all the rattlesnakes for miles round: a most judicious function on the part of the Pigs. Behind the Pigs comes Jonathan with his all-conquering ploughshare,—glory to him too! Oh, if we were not a set of Cant-ridden blockheads, there is no *Myth* of Athene or Herakles equal to this *fact*; — which I suppose *will* find its real ‘Poets’ some day or other; when once the Greek, Semitic and multifarious other Cobwebs are swept away a little!” The thought of Carlyle as a possible pioneer beside the Missouri or the Platte is even more stirring than the thought of him as the shepherd of a Transcendental flock beside the Concord and the Charles. It was his “odd dream” that he “might end in the western woods.”

Both Carlyle and Emerson got their new birth from Germany,—Carlyle immediately, from Schelling, Richter, Schiller, and Goethe;

Emerson mediately, from Coleridge and Carlyle himself. Of the early group of New England Transcendentalists Emerson tells us that "perhaps they only agreed in having fallen upon Coleridge and Wordsworth and Goethe, then on Carlyle, with pleasure and sympathy." "He is almost more at home in our literature than ourselves," Goethe said of Carlyle. It was the Germanism of Carlyle and his close relations with Goethe which especially drew Emerson to him at the first. He had already found in Coleridge and Wordsworth a higher form of thought than Andrews Norton had to teach; he had gone from one Boston church to another on Sunday mornings to hear Everett, fresh from his German studies; and his brother William had been to Germany to study theology, and had even gone to Goethe himself, to get his help about his doubts and duties. The indebtedness of both Carlyle and Emerson to German literature and thought was long greater than to almost all other sources. They were both, it is right to say, an integral part of the great German movement in thought, originating

in Lessing, Herder, Kant, and Goethe. Yet Emerson never had a "new birth," either through German influence or any other, in the way in which Carlyle had. His intellectual life was not a struggle, with its crises, but a steady and serene unfolding and enrichment; and it may fairly be questioned, as the English critic questions whether he would not have been essentially the same if he had never met Carlyle, whether he would not also have been the same had he never read Goethe,—to whom, nevertheless, his obligations were so distinct and great.

It was the example of Schiller which encouraged Carlyle to venture on the literary life. "The biographies of English men of letters," he says somewhere, "are the wretchedest chapters in our history, except the Newgate Calendar." But Germany furnished brighter examples; and the situation of Schiller especially, a youth of poverty, obstructions of all sorts, bad health, and the despondent tendency, was like his own, while Schiller's unswerving fidelity, his firm moral convictions, enduring through the

breaking up of creeds, and his final triumph gave confidence and inspiration.

From Schiller and like Schiller, Carlyle turned to Goethe, and found in him full satisfaction to the end. "Goethe especially was my evangelist," he said. If anybody's disciple, Carlyle was Goethe's disciple. "Emerson," Mr. Sanborn says rightly, "resembled Goethe more than Carlyle resembled Schiller"; although Grimm rightly notes, in comparing Emerson with Goethe and Schiller, that he was like Schiller in coming to the front in public emergencies, sharing the deep feelings of his time and people, to which Goethe was so often indifferent, turning seldom to anything save what was congenial. It must be remembered here that Carlyle, in his essay on Goethe, repeats with sympathy the declaration of Schiller, that the poet is a citizen not only of his country, but of his time; whatever occupies and interests men in general will interest him still more. Emerson called no man master and had far less of the element of discipleship in him than Carlyle; but he pronounced Goethe the leading mind of the

century, and Grimm, in writing of Goethe, acknowledges his debt to Emerson for the point of view from whence correctly to judge him. "Since Shakespeare there has been no mind of equal compass to Goethe's. There is the wise man. He has the largest range of thought, the most catholic mind; a person who has spoken in every science, and has added to the scientific lore of other students, and who represents better than any other individual the progressive mind of the present age." Place beside this the judgment of Carlyle: "In Goethe we discover by far the most striking instance, in our time, of a writer who is, in strict speech, what Philosophy can call a Man. He is neither noble nor plebeian, neither liberal nor servile, nor infidel nor devotee,—but the best excellence of *all* these, joined in pure union, 'a clear and universal Man.'" Emerson was an untiring reader of Goethe, urged to it by Carlyle,—read every one of the fifty-five volumes of his works, including "The Theory of Color," in the original, read him more than any other of the Germans, more probably than all of the rest

together; and in the last letter which he wrote to Herman Grimm (1871) he said, "For Goethe I think I have an always ascending regard." "Wilhelm Meister," he once said, "contains the analysis of life"; but "Faust" he "could not read nor endure," and he confessed late in life that he was unfamiliar with the Second Part. Less the disciple of Goethe than Carlyle, Emerson is more like him,—like him in his interest in nature as well as in man, his confidential love of nature, in his love of art, in the poet in him, in the enjoyment of life, above all in his calm repose. There was little of the Olympian about Carlyle, little of the Goethe temperament. He was more like Fichte among the Germans. Without dyspepsia, he would have been a Fichte; with dyspepsia, Fichte's "Addresses to the German People" and "Characteristics of the Present Age" would have been like "Past and Present" and "Latter-day Pamphlets." Goethe was less than Emerson in ethical and religious stature. If to his other qualities had been added the moral elevation of Kant, he would have been the greater Emerson.

226 The Influence of Emerson

The moral temptations, the self-complacency, and the lack of aspiration in Goethe, which made Parker—most mistakenly—rank his manhood and his influence alike below Voltaire's, and made him "rather be Blake sweeping Tromp out of the Channel for the nation's sake," Emerson was deeply conscious of. Goethe's thinking, though of great altitude, he found a table-land, without the "great felicities and miracles of poetry." "Of Shakespeare and the transcendent muse, no syllable." Emerson was no believer in culture for culture's sake; and he cannot forgive Goethe, being the great man that he was, for not being a greater man, "a redeemer of the human mind." He was "the poet of the Actual, not of the Ideal; the poet of limitation, not of possibility; of this world, and not of religion and hope."

Men of striking originality both, most quotable writers of the century, Carlyle and Emerson have both been peculiarly quoters and men of books, men who smack of the library. The best thing that the university does for a man, said Emerson in his better way, is to place him in intelligent possession

of the keys of the library. Books are the scholar's tools. Emerson's essay on "Books" should be put into the hands of every young man beginning life. "The colleges," he said, "whilst they provide us with libraries, furnish no professor of books; and I think no chair is so much wanted." Carlyle said the same thing in almost the same words; and both would have rejoiced at the degree to which many of our great modern librarians, in colleges and out of them, construe it as one of their regular and main functions to be professors of books. One would like to write an essay upon Emerson in the Study, dealing with the books which influenced him and with his essays in criticism.* One

* Dr. Holmes gives an interesting table of the twenty-seven men whom Emerson mentions twenty times or more, ranging from Shakespeare (112) to Chaucer, Coleridge, and Michael Angelo (20). See Cabot, vol. i., 288; also the section in John Morley's essay on Emerson which deals with Emerson's use of books and breadth of literary reference. One of the most interesting chapters of that very valuable little volume of "Talks with Emerson," by Mr. Charles J. Woodbury, which was a distinct new contribution to our knowledge of Emerson's thought, is that entitled "Criticism," reporting Emerson's judgments upon many writers, some not elsewhere touched upon. Gibbon, although a great example of diligence and truth, was "a mind without a shrine." "Read Chaucer!"—and he repeated without hesitation several verses from his "Good Counsel," saying, "I

228 The Influence of Emerson

would like to do the same concerning Carlyle. So much can easily be said,—that where we have an essay by Carlyle on any great writer,—Goethe, Richter, Novalis, Voltaire, Johnson, Scott, or Burns,—there we almost always have the best essay upon the

would copy it and have it always with me; it is a scripture." "I have seen an expurgated edition of Chaucer," he added. "Shun it! Shun expurgated editions of any one, even Aphra Behn or François Villon. They will be expurgating the Bible and Shakespeare next." "Don Quixote" and novels generally "made him yawn." "Why read novels? We meet stranger creatures than their heroes. What writer of stories would not be derided if he gave us creatures as impossible as Nero or Alva or Joan of Arc?" His depreciation of novels here, however, must be offset by his warm word of appreciation and prophecy of the novel's future, in his essay on "Books," and his remarks in his letters to Grimm, that, when he read rarely a good novel, he felt rebuked that he did not use "these delicious relations," and that he thought the tale, as opposed to the drama, "the form that is always in season." Of the American historians, Prescott was "thorough," Motley "painstaking," and Bancroft "reads enormously," and "always understands his subject"; but neither of them "lifts himself off his feet"; they "have no lilt in them." "Do not read by the bookful," he said. "Often a chapter is enough. The glance reveals when the gaze obscures. Skip the paragraphs that do not talk to you." "Avoid all secondhand, borrowing books: 'Collections of —,' 'Beauties of —,' etc. Do your own quarrying." "Read those men who are not lazy, who put themselves into contact with realities." "All criticism dealing with isolated points is superficial; the prevailing thought and disposition are your main care." "Stop reading if you find yourself becoming absorbed." "Shut the book when your own thought comes." "Seek first spirit, and second spirit, and third and evermore spirit."

subject which is to be found in the library. Carlyle was probably the greatest reader of books, as well as the greatest writer of them, in the England of his time. Both men were too great to entertain the upstart's fancy that greatness and originality lie in independence and trust in one's own intuitions. "The great man," said Emerson, "must be a great reader, and possess great assimilating power. He must depend upon others, because intuition is not constant, while we must try our own intuitions by those of other minds."

No men of our time have written better upon books and reading than Carlyle and Emerson, few have passed better literary judgments, none have kept company with better books. Both were at home with the Elizabethan and Puritan writers. One-third of the selections in "Parnassus" are from the seventeenth century. Both have written in the same strain of Shakespeare; but it is clear that Emerson really lived closest to him. "Shakespeare was a wonder," he said to Mr. Woodbury: "he struck twelve every time." "Perhaps the human mind," he said,

230 The Influence of Emerson

"would be a gainer if all the secondary writers were lost — say, in England, all but Shakespeare, Milton, and Bacon." Carlyle always spoke slightly of Bacon. To Emerson, Bacon's essays were "a little bible of earthly wisdom." Bacon and Berkeley "have been friends to me."

It is singular that Carlyle's references to Milton are so brief, casual, and unimportant. Above all men he loved the great Puritans. "I don't know, in any history of Greece or Rome, where you will get so fine a man as Oliver Cromwell." He loved John Knox in highest measure — and all men of that class. His "Cromwell" is the best contribution yet to the history of Puritanism, and that one of his historical books which will longest endure. By interesting coincidence, the only history which Emerson ever wished that he might write was a history of Calvinism with reference to its influence on New England. We should have expected a glowing panegyric of Milton in the "Cromwell"; but it is not there, although we are sure that this is but an unfortunate accident, and that Carlyle would

have written it heartily. Emerson declared Milton to stand foremost of all men in literary history, and so of all men, in the power to inspire. There was no man in history, literary or political, whom he honored more or with whom he more naturally measured himself. Dr. Holmes dwells on the parallelisms in their characters, their writings, and their lives. Emerson thinks of Milton on the ship which bears him back to America from his first European visit. "Milton did not love moral perfection more than I." Milton was the subject of one of his earliest lectures in Boston. In Milton "the man was paramount to the poet"; and he remarks upon the reason, the force of which he had felt in his own life, why, "the most devout man in history, he frequented no church." "Better than any other he has discharged the office of every great man, namely, to raise the idea of Man in the minds of his contemporaries and of posterity. . . . Human nature in these ages is indebted to him for its best portrait." "There is not in literature," he said, "a more noble outline of a wise external education than that

which Milton drew up, at the age of thirty-six, in his letter to Samuel Hartlib"; and his own great address on Education, the most pregnant and inspiring word on education yet spoken by an American, the most memorable English word since Milton, has the same dominant note which Milton sounded,—the note of *nobleness*. During his last visit to London he went to Milton's grave, and inquired, "Do many come here?" "Yes, sir, Americans." This picture of Emerson by Milton's grave in the old Cripple-gate church is also to be commended to the painter.

Scott, of whom Carlyle wrote one of his most interesting essays, seemed to Emerson to inspire his readers more than any other modern writer with affection to his own personality, and in the strength and variety of his characters to approach Shakespeare nearest. "There are no books for boys," he said, "like the poems of Sir Walter Scott. 'Marmion,' the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' and the 'Lady of the Lake' surpass everything we have for boy-reading." Burns was as dear to Emerson as to Carlyle himself.

“The Confession of Augsburg, the Declaration of Independence, the French Rights of Man and the Marseillaise are not more weighty documents in the history of freedom than the songs of Burns. . . . I find his great, plain sense in close chain with the greatest masters — Rabelais, Shakespeare in comedy, Cervantes, Butler and Burns.” “My excited fancy,” says Mr. Lowell, in speaking of the enthusiasm of Emerson’s discourse on Burns, “set me under the bema, listening to him who fulminated over Greece.”*

* It was this address on Burns which prompted Judge Hoar to the most remarkable tribute ever paid to the eloquence of Emerson. This was in his letter read at the meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society in May, 1882, immediately after Emerson’s death. Two things he wrote to emphasize. The first was Emerson’s power as a historian, of which he gave an impressive instance, and then added: “The second is his *power as an orator*, rare and peculiar, and in its way unequalled among our contemporaries. Many of us can recall instances of it, and there are several prominent in my recollection; but perhaps the most striking was his address at the Burns centennial, in Boston, on the 25th of January, 1859. The company that he addressed was a queer mixture. First, there were the Burns club,—grave, critical, and long-headed Scotchmen, jealous of the fame of their countryman, and doubtful of the capacity to appreciate him in men of other blood. There were the scholars and poets of Boston and its neighborhood, and professors and undergraduates from Harvard College. Then there were state and city officials, aldermen and common councilmen,

234 The Influence of Emerson

Coleridge was one of Emerson's masters ; it was because Coleridge led him to the Germans. The fame of Wordsworth he regarded as a leading fact in modern literature. Wordsworth was "the poet of England — the only one who comes up to high-water mark." "He has done more for the sanity of this generation," he wrote in the *Dial*, "than any other author"; and in his own Concord quiet he felt that a large part of this sanity was in living in Westmoreland

brokers and bank directors, ministers and deacons, doctors, lawyers, and 'carnal self-seekers' of every grade. I have had the good fortune to hear many of the chief orators of our time, among them Henry Clay, John Quincy Adams, Ogden Hoffman, S. S. Prentiss, William H. Seward, Charles Sumner, Wendell Phillips, George William Curtis, some of the great preachers, and Webster, Everett, Choate, and Winthrop at their best. But I never witnessed such an effect of speech upon men as Mr. Emerson apparently then attained. It reached at once to his own definition of eloquence, 'a talking sovereign possession of the audience.' He had uttered but a few sentences before he seemed to have welded together the whole mass of discordant material and lifted them to the same height of sympathy and passion. He excited them to smiles, to tears, to the wildest enthusiasm. His tribute to Burns is beautiful to read, perhaps the best which the occasion produced on either side of the ocean. But the clear articulation, the ringing emphasis, the musical modulation of tone and voice, the loftiness of bearing, and the radiance of his face, all made a part of the consummate charm. When he closed, the company could hardly tolerate any other speaker, though good ones were to follow."

and out of London. "The 'Excursion' was nearer to nature than anything we had before. . . . It was the human soul in these last ages striving for a publication of itself." He could quote almost entirely the "Prelude" and "Excursion"; and he included more selections from Wordsworth in his "Parnassus" than from any other save Shakespeare. From Carlyle on Coleridge in the *Life of Sterling*, and on Wordsworth in "Reminiscences" there is no need of quoting. "A man of great and useless genius" he calls Coleridge in one of his letters. Southey Emerson and Carlyle rated alike. When Landor praised Southey to Emerson, Emerson was "pestered" by it, and exclaimed, "But who is Southey?" When Carlyle read Southey's article on the Saint Simonians in the *Quarterly*, he said, "My brother, I say unto thee, thou art a poor creature." Landor himself was one of the four eminent men of letters — Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth the others — whom Emerson sought out in his first visit to Europe, in 1833, and to whom he devoted the first chapter of his "English Traits." Noting in this chapter

236 The Influence of Emerson

that Landor is "strangely undervalued in England, usually ignored, and sometimes savagely attacked," he records his own admiration of his energy and creative force, and his judgment that "year after year the scholar must still go back to Landor for a multitude of elegant sentences — for wisdom, wit and indignation that are unforgettable." He writes of Landor as of the others of the four in the *Dial*: "We do not recollect an example of more complete independence in literary life;" "he is a man full of thoughts, but not, like Coleridge, a man of ideas";* and as late at least as 1865 he was still praising Landor in yet higher terms.

*It was not until 1856, twenty-three years after the interview with Landor in Florence, that "English Traits" was published; and it provoked an Open Letter from Landor to Emerson, published in pamphlet form at Bath, which, now almost forgotten and unknown, is one of the curiosities of literature. Mannerly and courteous throughout, it gives evidence that Landor had been much more "pestered" by some things Emerson had said about himself than Emerson had been by Landor's own enthusiasm about Southey. For Southey he again takes up the cudgel, depreciating Carlyle and Wordsworth in contrast. When he had once heard Wordsworth remark that he "would not give five shillings for all of Southey's poetry," he had told a friend that he "might safely make such investment of his money and throw all his own poetry in." Southey, on the strength of Landor's early poem, "Gebir," had compared him with Goethe, and given him the preference. He hastens to say that he doesn't con-

In Byron, Emerson sees a perverted will and a wasted life, once speaks of his genius as "unhallowed"; yet to Mr. Thayer, on the California trip in 1871, he spoke highly of Byron as an efficient poet, observing that "there is a sort of scenic and general luck about him." Carlyle, whose first message to the world almost had been, "Shut your Byron; open your Goethe," afterwards, when he heard of Byron's death, affected perhaps by Goethe's own great admiration for Byron, felt that "the noblest spirit in Europe" was gone. "If

sider this the greatest praise in the world; that, in his judgment, "fifty pages of Shelley contain more true poetry than a hundred pages of Goethe," that "Wilhelm Meister" is "trash," and that Goethe couldn't have written in a lifetime any twenty of his own "Imaginary Conversations." Gravitating to politics, he says, "Democracy, such as yours in America, is my abhorrence"; and he makes a vigorous plea for the lost art of assassination, counting the stigma placed upon it by the moderns a proof of our lapse from classic virtue, and calling especially for a revival of it with reference to the Austrian tyrant then trampling upon Italy. It might be guessed that here, as Emerson found touching other things in 1833, Landor "carries to its height the love of freak which the English delight to indulge"; but he is entirely serious. As concerns Landor's depreciation of Goethe, one remembers that Emerson had the same experience with Wordsworth. "He proceeded to abuse Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister' heartily. It was full of all manner of fornication. He had never gone farther than the first part; so disgusted was he that he threw the book across the room."

they had said the sun or moon was gone out of the heavens," wrote Miss Welsh, whom Carlyle only two years before had taught to shun Byron, "it could not have struck me with the idea of a more awful or dreary blank in the creation than the words, 'Byron is dead'"; and Carlyle answered, "The news of his death came upon my heart like a mass of lead—as if I had lost a brother. Late so full of fire and generous passion and proud purposes; and now forever dumb. Poor Byron! and but a young man, still struggling amidst the perplexities and sorrows and aberrations of a mind not arrived at maturity, or settled in its proper place in life. Had he been spared to the age of three-score and ten, what might he not have done, what might he not have been!"

Emerson "never could endure Shelley," Whipple tells us. "Shelley, though a poetic mind, is never a poet," he says somewhere. "I cannot read Shelley with comfort," he said to Mr. Woodbury. "His visions are not in accord with the facts; they are not accurate. He soars to sink." One

can imagine the suffering, however one may differ from Emerson's judgment of Shelley,—and I find its severity hard to understand,—with which he would have read Mr. Chapman's judgment, that in "Nature" he showed himself "a sort of Yankee Shelley"! Swinburne and the Englishmen of the fleshly ilk Emerson could not abide. In William Morris's verse he found much to admire, but he wished there were less of it. Of Browning and Ruskin he wrote no adequate or important word. As early as the days of the *Dial*, he discerned the genius of Tennyson. He "wants rude truth, he is too fine"; but it will be "long before we have his superior" as a lyricist. He met Tennyson in London in 1847, and found him the "most satisfying" of the English men of letters whom he had seen. "I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe," was Carlyle's appreciation of Tennyson.

There was almost none of his contemporaries in literary London for whom Carlyle had real admiration; there were few for whom he even expresses respect.

"Among the scrambling miscellany of notables that hovered about us, Leigh Hunt was probably the best,"—Leigh Hunt deeply impressed Emerson in London as a pure and beautiful spirit,— "Charles Lamb the worst." Campbell's head was a "shop" and his heart "as dry as a Greenock kipper"; Proctor was a good-natured man, but "essentially a small"; De Quincey, "the dwarf opium-eater," "carries a laudanum bottle in his pocket and the venom of a wasp in his heart"; Hazlitt was writing his way through France and Italy, "the ginshops and pawnbrokers bewailing his absence." "Good heavens! I often inwardly exclaim, and is this the literary world? This rascal rout, this dirty rabble, destitute not only of high feeling and knowledge or intellect, but even of common honesty! . . . Not red-blooded men at all; only things for writing articles." Yet we must remember that Emerson and Goethe, whom Carlyle esteemed so highly, were his contemporaries; and we must not forget his enthusiasm for Dickens, his love for Mill, and the essay on the Corn Law Rhymes.

Emerson's appreciation of his American contemporaries was generous and enthusiastic. Channing, who belonged more perhaps to the preceding generation than his own, he especially revered. He was "the star of the American church," "one of those men who vindicate the power of the American race to produce greatness." Of his relation to the group of Transcendentalists it is not necessary to speak. He had great admiration for the verses of Helen Hunt; he regarded Forceythe Willson as a poet of extraordinary promise; he brought Ellery Channing's "Wanderer" before the public; and he greeted Walt Whitman "at the beginning of a great career." "It was one part of Emerson's mission," says Sanborn, "to appreciate the best of contemporary authors before the great world did so. Lander, Carlyle, Charles Reade and Matthew Arnold are cases in point, not to mention Alcott, Thoreau and Ellery Channing, William Allingham and David Wasson." He devoted much time and pains to securing the publication of Jones Very's essays and poems. Quick in praise of new authors,

he was plain in criticism. Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" is "a singular blending of the Bhagavat Ghita and the New York *Herald*."

He discussed his American contemporaries very freely with Mr. Woodbury, paying tribute to Dr. Holmes's acuteness, fine sensibility, versatility, and catholicity of taste; to Lowell's geniality and wit,—“it does one good to read him”; to Thoreau, of whom he talked oftener and more tenderly than any other, calling him “my Spartan-Buddhist,” “a man whose core and whose breath was conscience”; to Forceythe Willson, whose parting song “far surpasses Poe in his most peculiar vein”; and to Alcott, whose life is “full of beatitudes.” “Socrates thought Athens ought to support him; and Alcott thinks Boston commonwealth ought to support *him*—and it ought.” Louisa Alcott “is, and is to be, the poet of children; she knows their angels.” Walt Whitman, whose “Leaves of Grass” is “wonderful,” he contrasts with Poe and his “happy jingle,”—almost the very phrase, it will be remembered, which he used con-

cerning Poe in talking with Mr. Howells. He would have read with curious surprise the recent dictum of one of our leading literary journals, that the three greatest American men of letters are "Emerson, Hawthorne, and Poe." He would have said that a first qualification for a great man of letters is to have something of import to say; and he would have named a dozen poems of Lowell's—to go no farther—as beautiful in word and form as anything of Poe's, with the additional merit of import. The real greatness of Hawthorne he failed to appreciate. "No one ought to write as Hawthorne has," he said; and concerning "The Scarlet Letter" he exclaimed, "Ghastly, ghastly!" This was in accordance with a general principle of his. "I do not read the sad in literature," he said. He would not read "Les Misérables." "In all good writings" he expected to find something "hearty or happy." "Melancholy is unendurable," he said; "grief is abnormal."

The extent to which Emerson pressed this doctrine, wholesome and necessary as it is in its right measure, surely marks one

of his limitations; and in the argument between him and young Woodbury, which the latter reports, the student has the stronger case, showing what the deep and tragical notes are which breathe through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, from the story of Job to the story of Calvary; what the problems are with which Greek tragedy and the Eastern scripture deal; what it is that Dante wrote into his poem and life wrote into Dante's face; what the myriad miseries and sorrows are which Shakespeare was "too faithful to humanity to conceal"; and what the sights were which blind Milton saw,—what the imperatives to "Paradise Lost," "Samson Agonistes," and "Il Penseroso." Perhaps the strongest pages in Mr. Morley's essay are those in which he similarly points out Emerson's failure to grapple as Milton and Michael Angelo and Dante and Æschylus and Isaiah grapple—yes, and Hawthorne and Hugo and Carlyle—with the world's dark tragedies of sin and suffering, depravity and death.*

* To Michael Angelo he makes concessions. "I miss cheerfulness," he says, writing of him to Herman Grimm. "He is tragic,

We are brought here so close to the point which is most discussed by religious critics in their essays upon Emerson, the point of his Christianity in relation to his Hellenism, that reference should be made to his own clearest and strongest statement of his position. That, it seems to me, is his essay on "The Tragic," which, first given as a lecture, then published in the *Dial*, stands now as the last essay in the last volume of his complete Works, with its last words these: "The intellect in its purity and the moral sense in its purity are not distinguished from each other, and both ravish us into a region whereinto these passionate clouds of sorrow cannot rise." Emerson is not blind to the world's sorrow. His first words are: "He has seen but half the universe who never has been shown the house of Pain." But he holds that "all sorrow dwells in a low region." The real tragic element, he insists, is almost invariably Terror; and Terror is born of ignorance of our own real nature and

like Dante." "But," he adds, "we must let him be as sad as he pleases. He is one of the indispensable men on whose credit the race goes." He pays tribute to him, also, as "a noble, suffering soul,—poor, that others may be rich."

of the constitution of the universe. "All melancholy, as all passion, belongs to the exterior life." But when a man is "grounded in the divine life by his proper roots,"—that is, when he sees the end from the beginning, as God sees it,—he can feel neither terror nor sorrow; and the task of the religious man, the son of God, is to elevate life to transcendence of both. Sorrow and suffering, in a word, are not attributes of the Infinite, but of the finite and imperfect. The Divine is joyful, because it always knows the function of discipline and sees that the end is good; and we rise to this confidence and serenity as we realize our own divinity. So far as we are God, so far we do not sorrow. There is no other word of Emerson so Greek as this; but here and not elsewhere the discussion of his attitude toward suffering and sin and sorrow must begin.

Emerson was greatly attracted by Montaigne. When a boy, he found a volume of Montaigne's essays among his father's books. After leaving college, it came again to his notice, and he procured the remaining volumes. "I remember the delight and won-

der," he says, "in which I lived with it. It seemed to me as if I had myself written the book in some former life, so sincerely it spoke to my thought and experience." Yet he once said to a young man, "You shall not read Montaigne and be a poet," although at the same time he noted the fact that Montaigne's *Essays* was the only book known to have been owned by Shakespeare. Of Plutarch, whom he loves, he says: "He perpetually suggests Montaigne, who was the best reader he has ever found, though Montaigne excelled his master in the point and surprise of his sentences. Plutarch had a religion which Montaigne wanted, and which defends him from wantonness." It is noteworthy that among Carlyle's earliest writings also was an article on Montaigne—one of the articles contributed to the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*—and that this notice contains no word about Montaigne's religious scepticism, but treats the character purely from its human and literary sides. "Montaigne's faithful delineation of human feelings, in all their strength and weakness, will serve as a mirror to every mind capable of self-examination."

It was through Montaigne that Emerson and John Sterling were first drawn together. Sterling wrote a loving criticism of Montaigne in the *Westminster Review*, with a journal of his own pilgrimage to Montaigne's estate and château, which attracted Emerson's attention; and soon after he records, "Carlyle writes me word that this same lover of Montaigne is a lover of me." Sterling had taken "Nature" to his heart; and Carlyle writes of him to Emerson as one "whom I love better than anybody I have met with since a certain sky-messenger alighted to me at Craigenputtock and vanished in the Blue again." Emerson and Sterling at once entered into correspondence; and this correspondence, extending almost to the day of Sterling's death, and recently published with a tender introduction by Emerson's son, constitutes one of the most beautiful chapters in the biographies of the two men, who strangely never met. In one letter Sterling writes to Emerson, "You are the only man in the world with whom, though unseen, I feel any sort of nearness," making us think of the closeness with which that other

rare English spirit, whose spiritual struggles were so like Sterling's, Arthur Hugh Clough, was drawn to Emerson.* Emerson felt that Sterling "had certain American qualities in his genius." To Emerson Sterling dedicated in the following lines his tragedy of "Strafford," published the year before his death:—

"Teacher of starry wisdom, high, serene,
 Receive the gift our common ground supplies;
 Red flowers, dark leaves, that ne'er on earth had
 been
 Without the influence of sidereal skies."

Both Emerson and Carlyle read much that was ephemeral and contemporaneous, studied and wrote much upon the social movements of their period, published much in the magazines. Emerson was editor of two reviews, and one of the group of writers who started the *Atlantic Monthly*; and he knew the value of newspapers—and their danger to the scholar. "Newspapers have done much to abbreviate expression, and so to improve style. They are to occupy

* Herman Grimm, in 1867, wrote to Emerson in almost Sterling's words, "I can mention no one whom I wish to know except yourself."

250 The Influence of Emerson

during your generation," he said to the Williams student, "a large share of attention; and the most studious and engaged man can only neglect them at his cost. But have little to do with them. Learn how to get their best without their getting yours. Do not read them when the mind is creative; and do not read them thoroughly. Remember they are made for everybody, and don't try to get what isn't meant for you. There is a great secret in knowing what to keep out of the mind as well as what to put in. Give yourself only so many minutes for the paper; then you will learn to avoid the stuff put in for people who have nothing to think." He would give to Concord and Boston and London what was their due; but he would not let the young scholar forget his citizenship in Rome and Athens and Palestine and Persia.

Emerson greatly loved the Persian poets, and he wrote a preface to an American edition of Saadi's "Gulistan." He loved the Vedas, put India into poems, and was really the first to turn American hunger or curi-

osity toward the Orient. The time which Emerson gave to Persian poetry Carlyle gave to Norse mythology; and perhaps he found a greater affinity with his own character in Odin and Thor than Emerson found in Saadi and Hafiz.

Both men lived much in the classical world, Emerson especially with Plato and Plutarch. The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, with whom Arnold chose to rank him, were especially dear to him in his youth. Emerson's favorite study in school and college days was Greek, and many of his translations of both Greek and Latin authors were remarkably good. In mathematics he could make no headway, whereas Carlyle's mathematical ability was so great as to have drawn the attention of Legendre. He translated Legendre's *Geometry*, and he was at one time a prominent candidate for the professorship of astronomy in Edinburgh University. "Of the old Greek books," said Emerson, "there are five which we cannot spare: Homer, Herodotus, Æschylus, Plato, and Plutarch"; but really only the last two seem to have been among

his inseparable friends. There is no writer of whom he speaks with more constant fondness than Plutarch. No other American has written of Plutarch so well. "I must think we are more deeply indebted to him than to all the ancient writers," he says. "I do not know where to find a book, to borrow a phrase of Ben Jonson's, 'so rammed with life.'" "I find him a better teacher of rhetoric than any modern. His superstitions are poetic, aspiring, affirmative. A poet might rhyme all day with hints drawn from Plutarch." "His faith in the immortality of the soul is another measure of his deep humanity. . . . He believes that the doctrine of the Divine Providence and that of the immortality of the soul rest on one and the same basis,"—as did Emerson himself.

Emerson early came to love Plato, and after leaving college and all through his life studied him closely. "Plato," says Dr. Holmes, "comes nearest to being his idol, Shakespeare next." "Out of Plato," he said, "came all things that are still written and debated among men of thought. The

work of Plato is that writing which, in the history of civilization, is entitled to Omar's account of the Koran, when he said, 'Burn the libraries; for, if they contain anything good, it is contained in this book.' " "Why," he asks, "should not young men be educated in this book [Plato]? It would suffice for the tuition of the race!" "Read Plato's 'Republic'! Read Plato's 'Republic'! Read Plato's 'Republic'!" he repeated to one young man. "He lifts man toward the divine, and I like it when I hear that a man reads Plato. I want to meet that man"; as he used similarly to say that he felt like embracing men who loved Horace. But "Plato," wrote Emerson of Carlyle at Craigenputtock, "he does not read, and he disparaged Socrates." Later, however, Carlyle studied Plato, and his political views were directly influenced by him. "I remember when Emerson first came to see me, that he had a great deal to say about Plato that was very attractive, and I began to look up Plato; but amid the endless dialectical hair-splitting was generally compelled to shut up the book and say, 'How

does all this concern me at all?' But later on I have read Plato with much pleasure, finding him an elevated soul, spreading a pure atmosphere around one as he reads"; and then he proceeds to quote, with great relish, Plato's beratings of Cleon, the shoemaker, for meddling with politics, and the rest of his scorn of the Athenian democracy.

The Neo-Platonists were always favorites with Emerson,—Plotinus and the rest; and he was a great reader of Swedenborg and the mystics. He placed Swedenborg among the five poets whom he recognized as defying the powers of destruction,—Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Swedenborg, and Goethe. Of Dante's power to embody his own life and time in highest poetry Emerson wrote the most striking words which have been written; but his general use of Dante is not important—while Carlyle spoke the first adequate word of appreciation of Dante in modern England. Emerson specially valued the bibles of the race and such authors as Epictetus, Thomas à Kempis, and Pascal. The highest class of books, he said, are those which express

the moral element; the next, works of the imagination; and the next, works of science. "There is a mental power and creation," he says in one place, "more excellent than anything which is commonly called philosophy and literature." The high poets, as Homer, Milton, and Shakespeare, "do not fully content us." They "do not offer us heavenly bread"; and the true poetry is to be found in Zoroaster and Plato, Saint John and Menu, "with their moral burdens." Above all is the Bible, most original and most profound. "People imagine that the place which the Bible holds in the world it owes to miracles. It owes it simply to the fact that it came out of a profounder depth of thought than any other book, and the effect must be precisely proportionate." "Gibbon fancied that it was combinations of circumstances that gave Christianity its place in history; but in nature it takes an ounce to balance an ounce." "The most wonderful words I ever heard of being uttered by man," said Carlyle, "are those in the four Evangelists, by Jesus of Nazareth. Their intellectual

256 The Influence of Emerson

talent is hardly inferior to their moral." "Our divinest symbol," he said, "is Jesus of Nazareth and his life and what followed therefrom; higher has the human thought not yet reached." Jesus, said Emerson, "alone in all history estimated the greatness of man."

Both men were lovers of history, reverencers, with all that was prophetic in them, of the past and its great lessons. Carlyle was the greatest historian in the England of his time. He wrote wise essays upon "Biography," "History," and "History Again," and devoted to history his last public utterance. "History" is the subject of the first essay in Emerson's first series of essays; and the first word sounds his keynote of interpretation. One of his earliest and most important lecture courses was one—twelve lectures—upon the "Philosophy of History." He had the highest qualities of the historian. Judge Hoar's tribute to his historical address on Concord as "the most complete and exquisite picture of the origin, history, and peculiar characteristics of a New England town that has ever been

produced" was a just tribute. There are no lines which throw more illuminating light than his upon every period of our American history,—the Colonial period, the period of the Revolution, and the period of the Anti-slavery struggle and the Civil War.

Both men were students of the individual. In reading history, Emerson said, the student is to "prefer the history of individuals." He gives lists of the autobiographies and table-talks which he loves, the books which bring the student close to the heart of the great actors of a period. He prized the works of Ben Jonson as "a sort of hoop" to bind all the Elizabethan men together and to England. Biography is the only history, Carlyle said: history is chiefly the record of what the great men in the world have done. Emerson was not a hero-worshipper in the Carlylian sense. History is all in me, he said,—in every man. The foundation idea of his interpretation of history is that there is one mind common to all individual men. Carlyle writes of Hero-worship, Emerson of the Uses of Great Men. The great man is the useful man,

the greatest man the best servant. "Self-trust," he said, "is the essence of heroism." "That which takes my fancy most in the heroic class," he says, "is the good humor and hilarity they exhibit." This is true of some of the heroic, but it is not true of others. "Times of heroism," as he recognizes, "are generally times of terror"; and the hero of the terror must be sad and stern. "Emerson's ideal," says John Burroughs, "is always the scholar, the man of books and ready wit; Carlyle's hero is a riding or striding ruler or a master worker in some active field." Yet we criticise these generalizations almost as fast as we make them, and file the crowding exceptions. We think of Carlyle's tribute to the literary life as the most fortunate and influential life, in his essay on Voltaire; and Emerson mentions Napoleon, generally in praise of some energetic quality, oftener than he mentions anybody else save Shakespeare, oftener than Plato, Plutarch, or Goethe, who stand next in order. It is illuminating to compare Emerson's "Representative Men" and the subjects of his early biographical

lectures, Michael Angelo, Milton, Luther, George Fox, and Edmund Burke, with the men whom Carlyle chooses to represent his sundry heroisms. With the early biographical course he gave an introductory lecture on "The Tests of Great Men," corresponding to the lecture on "The Uses of Great Men," which introduced the course on "Representative Men." The two write often of the same men,—Napoleon, Goethe, Shakespeare,—but differently. Carlyle is always the advocate or prosecutor; Emerson is judicial, and we feel a kind of finality in what he says. Napoleon's case cannot be reopened. There is in Emerson's page always a certain spirit of superiority to the man he writes of; but we find that this is born of his identification of himself with humanity, his taking of his reader into partnership, and the judgment appears no more his than ours as we read. To Carlyle common mankind is a mere flock of sheep, and the main thing is to find good "bell-wethers" for the "dull host." To Emerson "all men are wise; the difference is in art." "The great are

our better selves, ourselves with advantages," the men who are able to express more clearly some idea which others also accept, and the homage paid them is "anything but humiliation; it is men's expression of their hope of what they shall become when the obstructions of their malformation and mal-education shall be trained away."

Right here is the ground of the main differences between Carlyle and Emerson. Here Carlyle goes to despotism,—a despotism, albeit, based in a searching radicalism and rooted in most human sympathies, a despotism of brains, loving the people and having no respect for the "dignities and a' that," a despotism a thousand times more democratic than all Whiggism,—and Emerson is the stanch republican. No one could characterize Carlyle's politics better than Emerson himself: "Young men, especially those holding liberal opinions, press to see him, but he treats them with contempt; they profess freedom, and he stands for slavery; they praise republics, and he likes the Russian czar; they admire Cob-

den and free trade, and he is a protectionist in political economy; they praise moral suasion, he goes for murder, money, capital punishment, and other pretty abominations of English law; they wish freedom of the press, and he thinks the first thing he would do, if he got into Parliament, would be to turn out the reporters and stop all manner of mischievous speaking to Buncombe and wind-bags; they go for free institutions, for letting things alone, and only giving opportunity and motive to every man, he for a stringent government, that shows people what they must do, and makes them do it."

Carlyle really never thought himself out in politics. He railed,—and that is easy,—and he had plenty to rail at: the faithful and hopeful democrat is as conscious as he of the defects of democracy. But he suggested no method by which his benevolent despot could be made a despot in this modern world, or kept benevolent, or secured a benevolent successor; and he would have railed at any method which any man had ventured to suggest. Some glimmering of a better way painfully evolving in humanity

262 The Influence of Emerson

he curiously confesses to Emerson himself in one of his last letters (1871): "In my occasional explosions against Anarchy, and my inextinguishable hatred of *it*, I privately whisper to myself: Could any Friedrich Wilhelm now, or Friedrich, or most perfect Governor you could hope to realize, guide forward what is America's essential task at present faster or more completely than 'Anarchic America' is now doing? Such 'Anarchy' has a great deal to say for itself." *

* "Emerson's high and transparent sanity, among other things, kept him in line with the ruling tendencies of his age, and his teaching brings all the aid that abstract teaching can towards the solution of the moral problems of modern societies. Carlyle chose to fling himself headlong and blindfold athwart the great currents of things, against all the forces and elements that are pushing modern societies forward. Beginning in his earlier work with the same faith as Emerson in leading instincts, he came to dream that the only leading instinct worth thinking about is that of self-will, mastery, force and violent strength. Emerson was for basing the health of a modern commonwealth on the only real strength, and the only kind of force that can be relied upon, namely, the honest, manly, simple and emancipated character of the citizen. This gives to his doctrine a hold and a prize on the work of the day, and makes him our helper. Carlyle's perverse reaction had wrecked and stranded him when the world came to ask him for direction. In spite of his resplendent genius, he had no direction to give, and was only able in vague and turbid torrents of words to hide a shallow and obsolete lesson." *John Morley.*

“Emerson told me once,” says Edward Everett Hale, “that when, in the winter of 1848, he left Liverpool for America, Arthur Hugh Clough, the young poet, accompanied him to the ship, and walked the deck with him until she sailed. Clough was sad for his departure. He said: ‘You leave all of us young Englishmen without a leader. Carlyle has led us into the desert, and he has left us there.’ Emerson said to him, ‘That is what all young men in England have said to me’; and he placed his hand on Clough’s head, and said, ‘I ordain you Bishop of all England, to go up and down among all the young men, and lead them into the promised land.’ Alas!” comments Dr. Hale, “Clough was not one of the leaders of men: rather a listener and a follower. And the young men of England and America were left to the greater lesson of the Master of Life,—that every life must for itself drink from the infinite Fountain. The days of chieftains, of proconsuls, of dukes and barons are gone by; the day of the boss and the magician was over when the Master of Life spoke the Word. The

kingdom of heaven is open to each man who will thunder at the door. The kingdom of heaven suffers violence; and the sturdy and persevering, and only they, are those who take it by force."

Emerson believed in the people, in the present and in progress. Carlyle painted the tombs of the prophets, but too often stoned the prophets sent to his generation. He would very likely have been much pestered by Cromwell and his Puritans if he had lived in London then; and he might have told Luther, if he had heard his hammer whacking on the door of Wittenberg church, amidst the rabblement, that he had better be attending to "the duty that lay nearest him." He failed to see Mazzini's vision, and to divine that he had the truest political prophet of the age to his neighbor, while walking in and out with him every day. Emerson was the universal man, to whom past and present, history and the newspaper, were the same. "'Tis wonderful," he writes in 1864, "what sublime lessons I have once and again read on the bulletin boards in the streets!" His perception

of the good was immediate; and he knew John Brown for a hero while the musketry was rattling at Harper's Ferry as truly as the men of Concord Bridge whose shot had been heard round the world and been applauded all along the line. Emerson believed in America and the republic, in its opportunity and power; and we go to him to feed our patriotism. "To him more than to all other causes together," Lowell has said, with great boldness, perhaps, and thinking of the Harvard heroes, "did the young martyrs of our civil war owe the sustaining strength of thoughtful heroism that is so touching in every record of their lives." Yet we must remember that, if Carlyle's pages are not calculated to stir the patriotism of Englishmen, there was little that was admirable in the social and political conditions of the England to which it was his lot to address himself. We do not go to Emerson's addresses on slavery to warm our love of country; and had Emerson been born, like Carlyle, into the midst of the "morgue of aristocracy," his speech there would often have taken the form of a Latter-day Pamphlet.

Here, too, in this root view of human nature, is the ground of such pessimism as there is in Carlyle and of Emerson's complete optimism. There is none of Carlyle's despair in Emerson. All evil is to him a temporary lack of harmony; and there is always at work in the affairs of the world a power which compels men to be just, so that what is useful and right will last, and what is bad and hurtful will sink. There is a law always working to make the best better and the worst good. Moral deformity itself is good passion out of place. "Nature is upheld by antagonism. Passions, resistance, danger, are educators. We acquire the strength we have overcome." Law is the highest method of freedom. No evil ever escapes unpunished. Crime and punishment grow out of one stem; but all work together for the universal good. This faith in the universal good grew with Emerson as he grew older; and hence the ever-deepening serenity and trust which made his last days best. It was the faith in Providence. "I have heard prayers,"—he asked his readers in the "Sovereignty of Ethics," his

last great religious utterance, whether they had never had occasion to say this to themselves,—“I have prayed, even; but I have never until now dreamed that this undertaking the entire management of my own affairs was not commendable. I have never seen, until now, that it dwarfed me. I have not discovered, until this blessed ray flashed just now through my soul, that there dwelt any power in nature that would relieve me of my load. But now I see.” It is in the persistent, consistent faith in the soul, in man, in progress, and in the reliable omnipotence of the good, that Emerson’s superiority to Carlyle consists. This is the faith that sustains and inspires, and this alone that can do it constantly.

It is bad to be with Carlyle habitually. It is bad not to have Emerson always on the table. He is a civilizer. His reverence for man as man begat the gentlest manners and the most delicate deference to all. He rebukes our rudeness, hurry, and self-assertion by the mere thought of him, while Carlyle often feeds them. “He is a born gentleman,” said Frederika Bremer. He

was the perfect gentleman for the same reason that he was the perfect republican. We should laugh at an essay from Carlyle on Manners, kind as that great heart was in its innermost, and fine his courtesy when he bethought himself. He was boisterous, obtrusive often and rude, breaking every rule of etiquette, perhaps, every twenty-four hours. He was forgetful of others, careless too often, if comfortable himself, whether others were comfortable or no, careless how much he might disturb the peace and happiness of others by the vain and ineffectual ventilation of his own miseries. He was doubtless an uncomfortable man to live with, much of the time; and the loneliness and hardships to which Mrs. Carlyle was subjected during those long years at Craigenputtock, with the pans and kettles, and with no "immensities" or "eternities" of her own, to speak of, to cheer her up, were certainly severe. Thoughtlessness? Yes; but it was mournful thoughtlessness, and perhaps the remorse of "Reminiscences" was scarcely too severe an atonement for this and some of the London matters,—

although too much has been heard of all this, and the gossip has done gross wrong to Carlyle and to the truth.

Emerson was by far the rounder man, more-sided. A many-sided man it is not just to call Carlyle. Of prodigious knowledge, writing on many subjects, these are chiefly in a few directions, circling round and illustrating a few great ideas. Man, in his history and destiny and literature, was what exclusively held Carlyle's attention; and history and society he approached with serious limitations. That quick and loving interest in nature which breathes in all of Emerson's pages, and of which his poetry especially is so largely an expression, we look for in vain in Carlyle. Nor was his interest in Art greater. Such interest as appears is the interest rather of the student of history, who must take account of art as of politics or of pauperism. "I was at the Museum a week ago seeking pictures [for the French Revolution]; found none; but got a sight of Albert Dürer and (I find) some shadow of his old *teutschen*, deep, still soul, which was well worth the getting." It is an interest in

the man, not the artist,—as he was interested in portraits of John Knox. He would probably have been equally interested in one of Holbein's Henries and in the Mona Lisa. We should like to know what he was chiefly thinking about as he wandered with Emerson, on that Stonehenge day, through Wilton Hall, among the pictures and the statues, "to which Carlyle, catalogue in hand, did all too much justice." He should have been interested in art, if only to have written adequately on the man, Michael Angelo. There is nothing that he did not give us which we should have liked so well, unless it be the Life of Luther. In Emerson's study there was only one large picture, a copy of Michael Angelo's "Fates." We should have looked for this with Carlyle, perhaps, and here rather for the "Transfiguration" or the Parthenon. But do not we see on second thought that it was in its proper home, and that its prominence was proper? "The moral sentiment in us is inspiration; out there in Nature we see its fatal strength. . . . The dice are loaded; the globe is a battery, because every atom is a

magnet ; and the police and sincerity of the universe are secured by God's delegating his divinity to every particle ; there is no room for hypocrisy, no margin for choice. . . . The book of Nature is the book of Fate. . . . If we give it the high sense in which the poets used it, even thought itself is not above Fate ; that, too, must act according to eternal laws." Emerson would have been most likely to have given us the adequate essay on "the hand that rounded Peter's dome,"—as that hand, writing upon Fate, would have fixed its relation to freedom just as Emerson fixed it. Indeed, Emerson did lecture upon Michael Angelo,—it was, I think, the first biographical lecture he ever gave. In inculcating self-reliance, he appeals to Michael Angelo's course,—“to confide in one's self and be something of worth and value” ; and both in prose and verse he celebrates his divine inspiration : “Michael Angelo is largely filled with the Creator that made and makes men.” “Himself from God he could not free.” “It is almost a test by which the finest people I have ever known might be

selected," he writes to Herman Grimm,—
 "their interest in Michael Angelo and his friends, Vittoria Colonna in chief." He corresponds enthusiastically with Margaret Fuller about Michael Angelo and Raphael. The Boston Athenæum—"on whose sunny roof and beautiful chambers," writes Emerson, "may the benediction of centuries of students rest with mine"—had then just added to its library a small collection of plaster casts, Michael Angelo's "Day" and "Night" among them, and a good number of engravings of the works of the French and Italian masters. "Here was old Greece and old Italy brought bodily to New England, and a verification given to all our dreams and readings." But Emerson has not written so wisely or with so much inspiration on painting and sculpture as on poetry: we could wish that, when embalming Guercino in song, he had written another name instead, and such like; yet upon the general principles of all true art what other American has written essays comparable in luminousness and stimulation with his?

Carlyle doubted whether Art, in the old

Greek and Italian sense, were possible for men in this era. "Were not perhaps the founder of a religion our true Homer at present?" he asked. "The whole soul must be illuminated, made harmonious." "I will try for Winckelmann," he said again; "but in my heterodox heart there is yearly growing up the strangest, crabbed, one-sided persuasion, that art is but a reminiscence now: that for us in these days prophecy (well understood), not poetry, is the thing wanted. How can we sing and paint when we do not yet believe and see?" There is deep truth here. Art in the antique sense has seemed almost impossible in this age. There is little which the sculptors or the painters have done in these days in England or America which really expresses the earnest or actual mind of the time, or will ever be hunted up as evidence. Pictures of buttercups and sunsets and the full moon cannot do it, although the love of nature is perennially welcome in painting, as in poetry; nor the yards of battles with which Berlin hangs its walls, and with which — records of reaction, obscuration, and anachronism —

274 The Influence of Emerson

New York and London may hang theirs to-morrow ; nor portraits of the dangerous little idle classes, manikins to carry silk and velvet that will stand the microscope. The art clubs have seemed fated to be dilettant, seemed rather suffocating places, which should be scented with jockey club and furnished carefully with chaste correctness, though with stuffed chairs. Their air has been as impossible for the people to breathe as the air of a Fifth Avenue church ; and the people have not breathed it,—only the indulged and fortunate have breathed it. Our art has not been for the people : our paintings have not been published, like our books, but parlored, and so calculated for the parlor. Not appealing and not able to appeal to the people, it has not reflected the people's life nor had roots in it. New England sent a roomful of pictures to represent her at the World's Fair. They did not represent her : no visitor could have told whether they came from Boston or Brittany. The student of New England by and by will turn back to the stories of Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Cooke and Miss Wilkins and Miss

Jewett, to Sumner's orations and Parker's sermons, to the "Biglow Papers" and Whittier's ballads and Emerson,—but not to the painters; for there is nothing indigenous and authentic there, nothing reporting life. Boston—the Puritan capital, the cradle of liberty, the freer of slaves, the home of historians, the centre of our golden age of poetry and letters—rears her temple of culture; and no canvas or marble on the walls to show that the foundations are not in Birmingham or Bordeaux or Bologna. It is not an answer to say that culture transcends patriotism and provincialism: a great civic life is not a provincialism, and the inspirations of the nation are a cardinal factor in all vital education and public experience. The answer is that art with us is still exotic—as likewise in Carlyle's England and Scotland. It was not so in Nuremberg and Venice and Florence and Athens. The painter and the sculptor told of life, of what was in the popular heart. Their work was as public as that of the tragedians and the orators, and profited like theirs from the public stricture and the pub-

lic praise; and so they, too, are among the historians,—exponents and chroniclers of the times. The fault is not with our artists; the fault is with ourselves. Carlyle was right. The problem of art is the problem of social regeneration. When our society believes and sees, then the artist will match the new life with his larger and braver work. That the braver and larger works have multiplied in England and America; that the public opportunity and craving come; that, even as Carlyle wrote, Ruskin, his own disciple, wrote also; that William Morris has lived and lives,—these are encouragements and warrants for the faith that broader and better social visions and ideals are multiplying, too.

Carlyle doubted whether Poetry itself is sincere in these days, and he inveighed against it in many of his friends. He inveighed against it in Emerson himself, and clearly never had any true appreciation of the beauty and worth of Emerson's poetry. "I did gain, though under impediments, a real satisfaction, and some tone of the Eternal Melodies sounding afar off. . . .

But indeed you are very perverse." Really he pities Emerson, and scorns him a little, for wasting his time on poetry. Yet he was himself truly a poet,—“with the gift of song,” says Mr. Lowell, “he would have been the greatest of epic poets since Homer”; and the subjects of his great “Cromwell” and “French Revolution” epics have as central place in the history of the modern world as the siege of Troy had to the Greeks. Curiously enough, we find him asking in his journal, many years before he went to London: “Were the true history (had we any such, or even generally any dream of such) the true epic poem? I partly begin to surmise so.” And, while he is beginning at “The French Revolution,” he writes, “Gleams, too, of a work of art hover past me,—as if this should be a work of art.” Writing to Emerson himself at this time, he said that “it was part of his creed that history is poetry, could we tell it right,”—which is true, as Emerson’s correlative, that “our best history is still poetry,” is true also, and more obviously and immediately true. The structural feel-

ing was always powerful in Carlyle; and "Past and Present," "Sartor," and the greater essays, no less than "The French Revolution," which is indeed a work of art, are carefully proportioned, and every member has its proper place. An essay of Carlyle's always remains a moving picture in the mind, while Emerson's essays, perfect in each sentence, have to most neither beginning, end, nor middle. Like "a bag of duck shot" we have noticed that Carlyle called them; and he somewhere spoke of them as like an army all made up of generals or captains. Emerson himself defended this lack of scheme in writing; and the way in which his lectures and essays grew and were put together has often been described. "You should start with no skeleton or plan," he said to the Williams student. "The natural one will grow as you work. Knock away all scaffolding. Neither have exordium nor peroration." Yet in another mood, clearly in self-criticism, he writes: "If Minerva offered me a gift and an option, I would say, Give me continuity. I am tired of scraps." In truth, the essays

differ much in degree of method and system, and most of them are far more logical in their arrangement than it is fashionable for folk who do not closely study them to say. Dr. Harris has published a careful analysis of "Experience," to show how much can be said for its logical and orderly process. That essay is but a fragment, and there are others where the analyst would fare worse ; but there are also others where he would fare quite as well. Mr. Chadwick has pointed out the peculiarly beautiful development and order of the Harvard address, which is perhaps cast more completely in one mould than any other single lecture or essay. It is only as we live long with Emerson that we see his fundamental logic and consistency, below all surface varieties, in his pervading and controlling ideas. "I am not careful," he says himself, in serene trust in the deep logic of his life, "to see how my thoughts comport with other thoughts and other moods,—I trust them for that,—any more than how any one minute of the year is related to any other remote minute,—which yet I know is so

related." He is logical as the landscape is logical, consistent as the earth is consistent, in whose common soil are rooted, asking no consent of each other, the lily and the rose, the oak-tree and the pine, and herbs great and small, wherein birds of a hundred species nest and sing.

Emerson is much more the poet than Carlyle, perhaps all poet, in essays and in verse alike. "I am born a poet," he wrote to Miss Jackson, adding in humility, "of a low class without doubt, yet a poet: that is my nature and vocation"; and to Miss Peabody he said the same: "I am not a great poet, but whatever is of me is a poet." Parker said, using almost Lowell's words upon Carlyle, that Emerson is a poet lacking the accomplishment of verse; and he made merry with Emerson's rhymes. But this is shallow, as most criticism like Arnold's on Emerson's poetry is shallow. In every seeming awkwardness we grow to find a wondrous strength and a wondrous fitness, and should shrink from a word that was simply of correcter length. Poets know poets; and every one of our

greater American poets has borne witness to Emerson as the greatest of their company. Holmes and Stedman have made the argument. Howells has said that Emerson, more perhaps than any other modern poet, gives the notion of inspiration; and truly, if anything in poetry ever rolled out of the heart of nature, thence came "The Problem," "Woodnotes," and "Each and All." No other American poetry teaches truth so profound as Emerson's. No poems—not Wordsworth's—have ever taken us so to the deep secrets of the woods and earth and sky as Emerson's poems of nature. None either are in so profound harmony with the modern philosophy of nature or have given it such fitting and synthetic voice. Carlyle was in small sympathy with modern science,—coupled Darwinism with atheism; but Emerson's genius anticipated and calmly mastered all. "In him," says Tyndall, "we have a poet and a profoundly religious man, who is really and entirely undaunted by the discoveries of science, past, present and prospective. In his case, poetry, with the joy of a bacchanal, takes her

graver brother, science, by the hand, and cheers him with immortal laughter. By Emerson scientific conceptions are continually transmuted into the finer forms and warmer lines of an ideal world."

Emerson is always definite and clear,—Hellenic; Carlyle is Hebraic, turgid and often ambiguous,—and there are Carlylians of the right and left wings and centre. The difference between the men is the difference—to use words, otherwise applied, of Emerson's own—between serene sunshine and lurid stormlights. Yet deeper than all differences, as both knew well, are the likenesses. Lowell speaks, in the "Fable for Critics," of the

... "persons, mole-blind to the soul's make and style,

Who insist on a likeness 'twixt E. and Carlyle."

But Lowell said many things in the "Fable for Critics" more smart than true, as he would doubtless be quickest to own,—not careful to trim the sentiment to a nicety, if the words jingled well. The likeness between Emerson and Carlyle was profound,

extending to the root conceptions and purposes of life, while the diversities were much more superficial. "Their effects upon the mind," says John Burroughs, with a high degree of truth, "are essentially the same; both have the 'tart cathartic virtue' of courage and self-reliance; both nourish character and spur genius. Carlyle does not communicate the gloom he feels; 'tis the most tonic despair to be found in literature." Yet there were never more striking differences between two men, and some of these are touched with acute discrimination in Lowell's familiar lines.*

*The books abound with parallelisms bringing out the likenesses and contrasts between the two; and the deductions and additions to which each of us is impelled in every case witness to the vitality and various impressive aspects of their thought. Says Whipple, in his essay on "Emerson and Carlyle," one of his three valuable essays relating to Emerson: "Emerson was the champion of the Ideal; Carlyle asserted the absolute dominion of fact. Emerson declared that Truth is mighty, and will prevail; Carlyle retorted that truth is mighty, and has prevailed. Emerson looked serenely at the ugly aspect of contemporary life, because, as an optimist, he was a herald of the Future; Carlyle, as a pessimist, denounced the Present, and threw all the energy of his vivid dramatic genius into vitalizing the Past. Emerson was a prophet; Carlyle, a resurrectionist. Emerson gloried in what was to be; Carlyle exulted in what had been. Emerson declared, even when current events appeared ugliest to the philanthropist, that 'the highest thought and the deepest love is born with victory on his head,'

284 The Influence of Emerson

Emerson is "sweetness and light" become flesh and dwelling among us. "What can you say of Carlyle," said Ruskin, "but that he was born in the clouds and struck by lightning?" Carlyle is sometimes half mad-man; Emerson is always sane and sanity-strengthening. Carlyle was Essene, and Emerson was Stoic; but the Stoic loved Hymettus and Ilissus better than the Porch, and the Essene loved Jerusalem more than Jordan. Carlyle was in many ways least human, and yet needed men the most, was most dependent on society and books, had least resources in himself. Both were humorists. Emerson, with his Yankee shrewdness, laughed quietly to himself at Brook Farm, religiously as he respected it, and in secret moods, doubtless, enjoyed as much as Hawthorne the succotash of philosopher

and must triumph in the end; Carlyle, gloomily surveying the present, insisted that high thought and deep love must be sought and found in generations long past, which Dr. Dryasdust had so covered up with his mountains of mud that it was only by immense toil that he [Carlyle] had been able to reproduce them as they actually existed. Look up, says Emerson, cheerily; 'hitch your wagon to a star'; look down, growls Carlyle, 'and see that your wagon is an honest one, safe and strong in passing over miry roads, before you have the impudence to look up to the smallest star in the rebuking heavens.' "

and cabbage and Margaret Fuller's "transcendental heifer"; and Carlyle's sense of the ridiculous always saved him from the final catastrophe, made his prophesying so much the better, and, by setting him outside himself, enabled him to become the artist, too. Both were great conversationalists. "Thomas Carlyle," said Emerson, "is even more extraordinary in his conversation than in his writing." "Emerson's conversation," says Mr. Conway, "was unequalled by that of any person I have ever met with, unless it be Thomas Carlyle." But Emerson needed the stimulus of sympathetic minds to draw him out, and was more ready to listen than to speak; while Carlyle was a haranguer, like Coleridge, whom he ridiculed. "You cannot interrupt him," Margaret Fuller found. "If you get a chance to remonstrate for a moment, he raises his voice and bears you down,"—which to Margaret Fuller must certainly have been severe. Both men were, by training and nature, scholars, loving quiet and not noise, yet both compelled by the needs of the time to enter the social arena and become leaders of reform. "Carlyle

286 The Influence of Emerson

thinks it the only question for wise men," wrote Emerson, "instead of art, and fine fancies, and poetry, and such things, to address themselves to the problem of society"; and Emerson's own lyre was hung up, when the national sin became rampant, until the nation's life was purified.

It is foolish almost to ask which was the greater man, Carlyle or Emerson, and whose influence will endure the longer. It was an Englishman, Matthew Arnold, who said categorically, "Emerson's work is more important than Carlyle's." It was an Englishwoman, George Eliot, who said, "I have seen Emerson, the first man I have seen." She also said, as she read the warm words which Carlyle had written concerning Emerson, "This is a world worth abiding in while one man can thus venerate and love another." Carlyle was in many ways the more remarkable personality, made the greater sensation in the world. The impression which he made upon his time was probably deeper, as the effects of the great Mississippi flood upon the Louisiana lowlands were greater than the effects of the

showers of a hundred Aprils, and will be talked of more by the next generation and the next. No such flood of reminiscences followed the death of Emerson as followed the death of Carlyle; and fifty years from now Carlyle perhaps will be read the more. He will have revivals,—look out for one about this time,—and he will have eclipses. Emerson will have no eclipses: he shines with a steady light. Like Plato, he will have his dozen readers through the ages; and for them his book will ever live, and they will be the teachers of the teachers.

The great work which Carlyle and Emerson did for their time, various as were the ways in which they did it, was essentially the same. It was not the literary work, for literary ends,—poetry, history, essays on Goethe and Napoleon and Montaigne. It was the work of social and spiritual renovation. It is as awakeners and inspirers, as preachers of self-reliance and individualism against the compliance, superstitions, gregariousness and sham that were rusting out the world, as prophets of the soul, eternity, and God, the universal miracle, against

agnosticism, mechanical philosophy, and a utilitarian morality, that they will be chiefly remembered, and that, being dead, they speak. They were the great prophets for England and America of the new idealistic epoch in the world's thought and life in which we stand and which began with Kant in Germany. Philosopher in the pedant's or precisian's sense—system-maker, cosmic pigeon-holer—neither Carlyle nor Emerson was, unless, indeed, Emerson, by virtue of the "Nature" essay and the lectures on the "Intellect," as "systematic" surely as Plato, may have earned that distinction. Philosophers in the true and antique sense, lovers of the high wisdom and teachers of first principles to men, they were the greatest in the England and America of their time.

"Carlyle," says Mr. Froude, "was a Calvinist without the theology,"—the Calvinistic theology. "Emerson," says Mr. Cooke, "was a Puritan, with all that is harsh, repulsive and uncomfortable in Puritanism removed." They were the Puritans of this time, the pure men and sincere. They

threw man back on himself and God once more, instead of on the congregation and tradition. "I cannot find language of sufficient energy," said Emerson, "to convey my sense of the sacredness of private integrity." "The priest of the intellect" Alcott named him. Timely is it to recall the words in days of shuffling with the creeds, as all days seem to be. "If we had any vivacity of soul, and could get the old Hebrew spectacles off our nose," said Carlyle, in such days, "should we run to Judea or Houndsditch to look at the doings of the Supreme?" "It is in religion with us as in astronomy—we know now that the earth moves. But it has not annihilated the stars for us; it has infinitely exalted and expanded the stars and universe." The circumscribing of God's energy to particular places and periods was irreverence to Carlyle and Emerson. He is a living God, his Bible has no covers, and the only supernatural is the "natural supernatural." The gateway to divinity they knew to be humanity. "The true shekinah is man," Carlyle quotes fondly from Saint Chrysos-

tom, and adds, "Where else is the God's-Presence manifested not to our eyes only, but to our hearts, as in our fellow-man?" The Christs are rooted where we are rooted. Jesus, said Emerson, was "true to what is in you and me;" his life is the life of every faithful soul, "written large." Both Carlyle and Emerson broke with the church of their day, the breach in Carlyle's case being wider than in Emerson's. "Do not imagine," he said, "that you can, by any hocus-pocus, distil astral spirits from the ruins of the old church." "The church," Emerson said, "is not large enough for the man; in the churches every healthy and thoughtful mind finds itself checked, cribbed, confined." To no other do we owe it so much that this is not so true to-day. When Dean Stanley returned from America, wrote Mr. Conway in 1879, it was to report that religion had there passed through an evolution from Edwards to Emerson, and that "the genial atmosphere which Emerson has done so much to promote is shared by all the churches equally." "There will be a new church," Emerson prophesied,

“founded on moral science, at first cold and naked, a babe in the manger again, the algebra and mathematics of ethical law, the church of men to come, without shawms or psaltery or sackbut; but it will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters; science for symbol and illustration; it will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry.” Emerson was one of the founders of the Free Religious Association; and he never stated his creed so tersely and well as in his second address to the Association. Looking to the future prophetically, he looked to the past, and especially to his Christian inheritance, reverently and gratefully. He would have sung at eve with deeper feeling even than he sang at prime,—

“We love the venerable house
Our fathers built to God”;

and Christ and Christianity ever held to him the central place in human history. “The name of Jesus is not so much written as ploughed into the history of this world.” He was glad to be called Christian, and

protested with sturdy sanity against splenetic jealousy of the word because it had been prostituted to narrowness and superstition. "I see no objection," he said, "to being called a Platonist, a Christian, or any other affirmative name,—and no good in negation"; and, condemning finical and arbitrary criticisms, he said: "Always put the best interpretation on a tenet. Why not on Christianity?" The protest which singles out Christ as the one leader in religion and thought to be denied his adjective he saw to be as narrow as the superstition which applies the term in some exceptional and unnatural way; but he would be Christian or Platonist in no way which did not always leave him first an Emersonian—himself—with no commanding allegiance save to God and truth. No irreverence ever drew from him words so severe as irreverence toward that great son of God to whom all the truly divine and religious souls of our portion of the race have looked back with highest veneration for highest inspiration. To Emerson, as to Carlyle, Jesus was the elder brother and supreme

friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit. Most Hellenic of all great American minds, Greek philosophy can no more explain Emerson than it can explain Milton. Milton, defending the purity of his youth, declared that, "though Christianity had been but slightly taught him," yet a "certain reservedness of natural disposition and moral discipline, learned out of the noblest philosophy," had been enough to keep him from all that was ignoble and unclean. But to the antique heroism of the mature Milton there is added a new and deeper element. It was, as Emerson himself said with such beautiful exactness, "the genius of the Christian sanctity"; and, in saying it, Emerson paid tribute to that in Milton which we can pay tribute to in himself in no other words so good as his: "Few men could be cited who have so well understood what is peculiar in the Christian ethics and the precise aid it has brought to men, in being an emphatic affirmation of the omnipotence of spiritual laws and, by way of marking the contrast to vulgar opinions, laying its chief stress on humility. The indiffer-

ency of a wise mind to what is called high and low, and the fact that true greatness is a perfect humility, are revelations of Christianity which he well understood." The distinctive Christian element, although this not in respect of humility, is more pronounced in Milton than in Emerson; but in no man since Milton have the Christian and the Greek been compounded in such harmony and fair proportion. Klopstock's "Messias" would have been endured by him less patiently perhaps than by Milton, although hardly less; and both knew alike how, and how only, paradise is regained — or gained — by every Christ and every man. Both Emerson and Carlyle did much to destroy that grotesque exaggeration of Jesus as an unreal demigod and of Christianity as the absolute and only religion, which has delayed and hindered the legitimate and beautiful influence of both as sadly as capricious dogmas of infallibility and plenary inspiration have obscured the charm and virtue of the Christian scriptures; they have both been potent forces in the reformation which is at last restoring to the Christian

Church itself a real Bible and a real Christ, and lifting the religious world to a comprehensive and worthy philosophy of history. If Carlyle sometimes went too far in his protest and impatience, it was because the Church's own sham and cant, inertia, and intellectual impiety compelled the extremest word of arrest and arousal. Emerson seldom went too far in aught, and never here.

Carlyle and Emerson believed in a living God. "Through every star, through every grass-blade," says Carlyle, "and most through every living soul, the glory of a present God still beams." "The first simple foundation of my belief," said Emerson, "is that the Author of nature has not left himself without a witness in any sane mind: that the moral sentiment speaks to every man the law after which the universe was made."

They believed in prayer, not as a means to effect a private end, the craving of a particular commodity,—“as soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg,”—but as communion with God. “As well,” said Emerson, “might a child live without its mother's milk as a soul without prayer.”

The first sermon which he ever preached was on Prayer; and prayer was the atmosphere of his life. His paper on "Prayers" in the *Dial* is an impressive collection of passages showing wherein true prayer consists. He loved to write "at large leisure in noble mornings, opened by prayer or by readings of Plato" or others of the divine masters. He prayed before the Harvard address of 1838; and, in discussing late in life the question of morning prayer in the Harvard chapel, he said it secured to the young men "the opportunity of assuming once a day the noblest attitude man is capable of." "Prayer," said Carlyle to a young friend, in his latter days, "is and remains always a native and deepest impulse of the soul of man; and, correctly gone about, is of the very highest benefit (nay, one might say, indispensability) to every man aiming morally high in this world. No prayer, no religion, or at least only a dumb and lamed one! The modern hero ought *not* to give up praying, as he has latterly all but done. Prayer is the aspiration of our poor, struggling, heavy-laden soul towards

its eternal Father; and, with or without words, ought *not* to become impossible, nor, I persuade myself, need it ever. Loyal sons and subjects *can* approach the King's throne who have no request to make there, except that they may continue loyal."

They believed in immortality. "What is excellent, as God lives, is permanent." Carlyle, it has been said, led us out of Egypt, but into the desert; and the pessimists who claim him for their father say that the mistake of men is in thinking there is anything else than a desert. But Carlyle had been on Nebo, and caught the vision of what was beyond Jordan. "Know of a truth," he said, "that only the Time-shadows have perished or are perishable; that the real Being of whatever was, and whatever is, and whatever will be, *is* even now and forever." "Everything is prospective," Emerson said, "and man is to live hereafter. That the world is for his education is the only sane solution of the enigma." "When we accept joyfully the tide of being which floats us into the secrets of nature, and live and work with her, all unawares

298 The Influence of Emerson

the advancing soul has built and forged for itself a new condition, and the question and the answer are one." "When we pronounce the name of man, we pronounce the belief of immortality. All great men find eternity affirmed in the very promise of their faculties. . . . The evidence from intellect is as valid as the evidence from love. The being that can share a thought and feeling so sublime as confidence of truth is no mushroom. Our dissatisfaction with any other solution is the blazing evidence of immortality."

What must this gospel — vital, vernacular, self-vouching, and not as of the scribes — not have meant, coming into the Puseyism and Simeonism and Jeffreyism and Whiggism, the rust and dust, and "great and Thursday lecture" of sixty years ago! Church, State, book, and man were galvanized and moribund. What was wanted was reality, shock, impulse, soul. Carlyle and Emerson came down as out of the sky at noon and troubled the stagnant waters, and there was life again. "Emerson," says Lowell, "awakened us, saved us from the

body of this death." "The works of two men," said Tyndall to the students of London University, "have placed me here to-day,—the English Carlyle and the American Emerson. They told me what to do in a way that caused me to do it, and all my consequent intellectual action is to be traced to this purely moral source." He spoke for ten thousand men.

Individualism,—that was the need of the time, as it is indeed the need of every time; but perhaps it is not the greatest need of this time. The shuffling with the creeds goes on and will go on; but it is seen to be poor business now, the business of pale and dilatory men, with whom the word of Kant and Lessing, of Channing and Parker, of Carlyle and Emerson, has not yet done its work. It will do its work. What we need to concern ourselves about is synthesis, reorganization, and advance. Indeed, is it not clear that true constructive elements are beginning in a hundred places to emerge, and that a time of faith and positive religion is nearer than many fears have augured to this distracted, analytic age? The way to enter

300 The Influence of Emerson

into it is by associated action in good work. Emerson, always in advance, saw that the time had come for this a generation ago. That another believed, as he did not, that Christ turned water into wine at Cana, was a slight thing compared with having the Christ spirit in the heart. With the man of this spirit he had fellowship; he had none with the man whose sole "religion" was pride in emancipation from some real or fancied superstition. His primary counsel to the Free Religious Association, in that strong speech in which he stated so clearly his own simple creed, was the counsel to sympathy and synthesis. "I think we have disputed long enough. I think we might now relinquish our theological controversies to communities more idle and ignorant than we. I am glad that a more realistic church is coming to be the tendency of society, and that we are likely one day to forget our obstinate polemics in the ambition to excel each other in good works." Emerson, it has been said, did us more good than any other among us, "first, by encouraging self-reliance; and, secondly, by encouraging God-

reliance." What we now also need is the encouragement of man-reliance, of co-operation and fraternity ; and here also he spoke the prophetic word, if it was not indeed the burden of his gospel. Carlyle preached righteousness to us, and Emerson taught us truthfulness, and we are debtors both to the Jew and to the Greek ; but to these we need to add fellowship and brotherhood, — to the Judaism of Carlyle and the Platonism of Emerson the warm Christianity and humanism of Mazzini, which knows God in its heart of hearts as our Father and our Mother too, and we one body and every one members one of another.

Yet so much I say with misgivings and repentances, and remember that while, as the sun of the late afternoon fell on Carlyle, it mellowed him, and whereas, in the period of the "Frederick," he seemed more and more to deify pure will, preach blood and iron, and have almost no good word for what most of us count progress, he now showed greater kindness to the spirit of the age and let fall words which said the criticism of the forties and the fifties was too

harsh,—so Emerson rose steadily above the bare individualism which goes into the closet ever and shuts the door, to hear what the great God speaketh, into ever fuller communion with the nation and the race. Ever he was the pleader for humaner politics and more generous social institutions; but more and more he saw that we must consider the communal problem and communal good. “There will dawn ere long on our politics, on our modes of living, a nobler morning, in the sentiment of love. This is the one remedy for all ills, the panacea of nature. We must be lovers, and at once the impossible becomes the possible. Our age and history, for these thousand years, has not been the history of kindness, but of selfishness. See this wide society of laboring men and women. We allow ourselves to be served by them, we live apart from them, and meet them without a salute in the streets. We do not greet their talents, nor rejoice in their good fortune, nor foster their hopes, nor in the assembly of the people vote for what is dear to them. Thus we enact the part of the selfish noble and king from the

foundation of the world." "The State," he said again, "must consider the poor man, and all voices must speak for him. Every child that is born must have a just chance for his bread. . . . No one should take more than his share." He warned the republic of the dangers ahead, if our social inequalities and injustices are not corrected, and that it is "better to work on institutions by the sun than by the wind." The same deep thought and feeling were at the bottom of Carlyle's impatience with *laissez-faire* and his preaching of strong government, which is why the socialist finds so many points of contact with him.

The War and the uprising of the North had much to do with deepening in Emerson the communal, national, and social sense. They made a profound impression on him, gave him a new idea of men's relations to each other, of the value of the State, and of the solidarity of the race. "Emerson," says Lowell, "reverencing strength, seeking the highest outcome of the individual, has found that society and politics are also main elements in the attainment of the desired

end, and has drawn steadily manward and worldward." "Age brought with it," says his biographer, "an even warmer glow of interest in his fellow-men; and the new life of the Republic brought to him an enlarged perception of the organic life of the race in its relations to morals and religion. He came to see a new value in a united religious life for the people, though abating no jot of his soul-trust."

Thus always is Emerson his own best balancer and correcter. A high philosophy and devotion to humanity,—that is the conjunction for which the world hungers and thirsts; and that conjunction is his message. If in some moment of new insight we except to this or that upon his page, so also we know might he; and we suspect that he is our forerunner in the apprehension. Always the just mind, the perfect faith, the wholly excellent spirit, the good will. The rest is but a question of the days and years: it does not touch the soul. And so all criticism is disarmed. This, we say, was the wise man, the perfect and upright; we find in him no fault at all.

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



124 443

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY